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Serbs protest at election robbery

Julian Borger in Belgrade

STUDENTS hurled eggs and abuse at public buildings on Monday as more than 100,000 demonstrators marched through Belgrade in an attempt to stop the government quashing an overwhelming opposition victory in last week's municipal elections.

The rally was the biggest protest so far against President Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian leader who played a central role in the war which followed Yugoslavia's break-up five years ago.

Addressing the crowd gathered in central Belgrade, an opposition leader, Zoran Djindjic, said: "This is no longer an election rally or a protest rally. This is a democratic revolution that Serbia has been waiting 50 years for."

But the monolithic Milosevic regime appeared unmoved. The police shrugged. Street sweepers were deployed to remove the sticky yellow mess left by the student assault on the city council, the television building and the headquarters of the Socialist Party newspaper.

Ilija Djukic, the former Yugoslav foreign minister and adviser to the Zajedno (Together) coalition, compared the demonstrations to the protests in the first serious attempt to remove the communist regime in 1991. "Substantial changes, however fragile, have started for a second time," he said.

He had hoped to rally international support for the reform movement, but was disappointed with the meeting with ambassadors. "They said very little. They need Milosevic. He is guaranteeing the Dayton [Bosnian peace] agreement for them."

Disappointment with the West runs through the opposition ranks. The British embassy in Belgrade voiced concern when Socialist-dominated municipal courts annulled opposition wins in most of Serbia's major towns and cities in local elections on November 17. The US state department called the behaviour of the regime "totally unacceptable".

"Where are the Western powers?" asked Srdja Popovic, who at 24 would have been the youngest elected member of the Belgrade city council if his 900-vote majority over his Socialist opponent had not been overturned. "A lot of people were looking to the West, but they are now disappointed."

He said the Socialists would not relax their grip on the big cities, because they would be the key to next year's national elections.

The election commission ordered a new round of voting this week, but Mr Popovic was adamant. "Why should I go to a new round of voting when I know that when I win again the result will be annulled?"

On the basis of provisional results last week, Zajedno claimed victory in 13 of the 18 largest cities in Serbia, including Belgrade. But the Socialists lodged protests, and the opposition's victories were either frozen, on the grounds of unspecified voting "irregularities", or reversed outright.

The unrest in Serbia has coincided with anti-government protests in neighbouring Croatia, triggered when the Zagreb authorities tried to close down Radio 101, the country's last independent station.

In both former Yugoslav republics, communist rule has been replaced by a hybrid of democracy and authoritarianism, characterised by strict state control over the media, weak opposition parties and government reluctance to accept opposition electoral gains.

Up to 100,000 demonstrators took to the streets of Zagreb on Thursday last week in a protest to save the popular Radio 101. "A quarter of the total Zagreb electorate took part in the protest. We really are talking about 'people power' here," one Zagreb-based diplomat said.

President Franjo Tudjman returned to Croatia last weekend after medical treatment in Washington. The 74-year-old president was being treated for stomach cancer.

Budget leak probe called

DOWNING Street this week ordered MI5 to spearhead an inquiry into an unprecedented leak of details of most of Tuesday's Budget to the Daily Mirror, *write Ewen MacAskill and Larry Elliott*.

The inquiry began after the Mirror editor, Piers Morgan, returned the leaked papers to the Government without publishing them, one of the most extraordinary journalistic decisions of recent years.

It amounted to the biggest Budget leak this century, much more extensive than the leak that cost the Labour Chancellor Hugh Dalton his job in 1947. Up to 100 pages of press releases, intended for distribution immediately after the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, finished delivering Tuesday's Budget speech, were obtained by the newspaper on Monday.

After a day of intense argument among senior Mirror journalists, Mr Morgan opted to return them. He said publication would have been "fairly reckless". Downing Street later confirmed that the documents were genuine.

The inquiry will be co-ordinated by the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robin Butler, and Special Branch. Sources indicated that MI5 would play a key role.

Tax bomb defused, page 8



Wreckage from the Ethiopian airliner lies in a lagoon off the Comoros PHOTOGRAPH: JUDA NGWENYA

Survivors tell of hijack crash horror

Ruaridh Nicoll at Galawa Beach, Comoro Islands

A LARGE lump had emerged on Hiwot Tadesse's temple, but from her eyes anger and shock burned out. "The plane bumped and then went to pieces," she said. "The next thing I knew is that I'm half way into the water. I cried for help."

Lying in the next bed, Yeshimebet Gepremestrkel, Ms Tadesse's fellow air hostess, lay back. "I was under water — I think Hiwot pulled me out, but I don't know."

The survivors of the Ethiopian Airlines ET961 crash in the Comoros were still dazed from their journey under three deranged hijackers. Survivors have since been airlifted out of the island. Only the dead remain.

It was a trip that had begun early last Saturday in Addis Ababa and ended when the plane ran out of fuel and dived into the Indian Ocean at 3.20pm local time.

The airliner had 175 people on board: 48 survived.

The Kenyan TV cameraman, Mohammed Amin, who captured the first pictures of the Ethiopian famine in 1984, was among the dead.

Six of the 12 Ethiopian crew survived, including the pilot, Captain Leul Abate, aged 42, and the co-pilot, Yonas Mekuria, aged 35, who had been badly beaten.

The hijackers were intent on reaching Australia despite the pilot's desperate pleas that he had only enough fuel for a routine one-and-a-half hour flight to Nairobi.

About 20 minutes after the plane had lifted off the three men stood up.

An Ethiopian passenger, Bisrat Alemu, recalled: "They said, 'We escaped from prison. We are against the government. We are hijacking the plane. We have an explosive. If anybody moves, we'll explode it.'"

The pilots were reportedly told by the hijackers that they numbered 11. After four hours, the pilot realised there was no choice but to put down. The plane was over the Comoros, north of Madagascar. He told the passengers one engine had stopped and they were about to crash-land.

As the plane began to descend the co-pilot, who had been pulled from the cockpit by the hijackers, intervened. "He pushed in, and together the pilot and the co-pilot made the crash-landing," said Ms Tadesse.

Caroline Fotherby, a manager at the hotel Le Galawa, said: "All you could hear was the sound of an aeroplane falling. And then there was a bang. The plane hit once, then hit again and nose-dived."

Survivors said a wing clipped the water. Then the body of the plane slammed into the sea, bouncing and turning over at least once before it broke apart.

"The first bump was really gentle. Then the second one was really hard," said one passenger, Frank Huddle, the United States consul-general in Bombay. "The third one was even harder, like a 70mph auto accident. The last one was like an earthquake."

Mr Huddle, aged 53, who survived with his spectacles intact, said he and his wife Shania clung to a passing windsurfer's board before being rescued by hotel staff. "I thought I was dead when we hit the water," he said.

Ethiopian Airlines, which marked its 50th anniversary earlier this year, has one of the best security records in the world.

Hijackings involving Ethiopian airliners have been characterised by a lack of clear political demands. As in the present case, the hijackers were desperate to leave Ethiopia.

"All the hijackers may be dead," Mary Ryan, the US assistant secretary for consular affairs, said on Monday. "What we are hearing is that the two people they arrested aren't hijackers — their story held up." The men are still being held in what the police call "protective custody". This would suggest that all three hijackers had died.

Obituary, page 22

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

US dollar diplomacy lets China off the hook

IT WAS distressing to read about Wang Dan (China quick to put away dissident, November 10). The United States can express "its concern that he was being tried for asserting rights guaranteed by Chinese law" as much as it wants, because China will never budge since "it considers human rights performance an internal matter" (A brave man is sent down in Beijing, November 10).

How much longer will the US continue to choose "a policy of increasing engagement with China"? If the US truly and sincerely believes in better human rights for the Chinese people what is it waiting for before it takes some action?

There are also implications for Hong Kong. If Governor Chris Patten does not stick to what he believes in, Hong Kong will not be as democratic as it is now. So until July 1, 1997, Hong Kong is quite safe but after that China will march in and impose its own system of government on the people.

As long as the US continues only to express its concern verbally, China won't give a damn — as has been proven countless times. If the US were to act economically against China, then perhaps it might listen because it is obviously interested in expanding its trade with the West. So until the day the US can see beyond the dollar sign, China will get what it wants.
Lorinda Lange-Willis,
Fundão, Portugal

WHILE I do not agree with or condone China's repression of political discussion, I cannot see any justification for the US government's so-called "moral stand".

The US government's meddling in the affairs and in the murder of civilians in Cuba, Laos, Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Angola — to name a few — gives it little "moral ground" from which to cast its heavy-handed stones.

It is therefore with satisfaction that I learned that the US is at least getting its just desserts at the UN by being voted off a key financial committee (the prestigious Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budget Questions) for not paying its UN fees (now amounting to $1.4 billion — equivalent to the UN's annual budget). Where do the moralisers feet stand on that broken promise?
Mark Horgan,
Kunming, Yunnan Province, China

Seeking an informed choice

IT IS unfortunate that Peter Gresshoff (November 17) puts forward a series of specious arguments and personal attacks, most of which display arrogance towards the general public and environmental groups, and which don't contribute towards a discussion of the central problem of genetically engineered food: information, understanding, agreement and choice.

A free market is created when informed and willing buyers and sellers come together. There is clearly propaganda being paraded as "information" by both sides (business and environmentalists), neither of which shows any sign of trying to create understanding. This is what passes as "politics".

Because the public don't have all the information they need to make an informed choice in some areas (eg, pesticide residues in food) is not an argument for extending this failure into a new area. It is the responsibility of the people introducing a new product to demonstrate to the public at large that it is safe and that it benefits the consumer. Monsanto has failed to do that to the satisfaction of a significant proportion of the population. It then wants to deny people the choice of using or not using its new product.

If the product is as wonderful as the snake oil salesmen claim, then the public will be easily persuaded and will buy it in large quantities if they can identify it on the shop shelves. All the environmental protests in the world won't stop them. But Monsanto shows no such confidence in its product, and is trying to claim, inconsistently, that it is both the same as the old product (so doesn't need separate labelling) and is also better than the old product (so should be used instead of it).

There have been too many instances in the recent past when "safe" new products have caused significant harm a considerable time after their introduction into the market. The public are signalling that it is time for scientists and governments to be more cautious. Insisting on clear labelling of new products helps drive this democratic discussion.
Simon Hodgson,
Vienna, Austria

Writers opposed to BBC moves

WE ARE deeply concerned about the consequences of John Birt's planned reorganisation of the BBC (BBC merges production, November 17). The implications are profoundly disturbing. The main aim is to enable the BBC to grab the commercial pickings of digital broadcasting. The thrust is towards homogenisation with the commercial sector. The emphasis is on delivery rather than content.

If the range of voices on the BBC is diluted for commercial expediency, Britain will be the poorer. The BBC will have lost its distinctive remit, there will be no need for the licence fee and public service broadcasting will be dead.

The proposed division between the editorial, commissioning and scheduling department, and the programme-making department, ignores the fact that the writing and making of quality radio and television drama can flourish only as an organic process. The best programme-makers and writers can come up with the most suitable suggestions only if they are aware of the thinking behind commissioning policy.

The BBC's restructuring processes have excluded creative artists. The Writers' Guild was not approached for input. Nor have writers any clear idea of how we will be expected to liaise in the future, either with BBC Production (which will make our work) or BBC Broadcast (which will commission it). How does BBC management intend to keep its 250 promises to its viewers and listeners?
Alan Ayckbourn, David Croft, Alan Drury, Ray Galton, Frank Muir, Jimmy Perry, Harold Pinter, Alan Plater, Jack Rosenthal, Willy Russell, John Wilsher, Victoria Wood and four others,
Writers' Guild of Gt Britain, London

Blame for Delhi disaster

THE MID-AIR collision over New Delhi needs to be seen against the general attitude of apathy and lack of strategic planning that symbolises almost every governmental department in India.

With the opening up of the Indian economy it was inevitable that air traffic would increase. Yet the ministry of aviation took its time to recognise the problem, although the Commercial Pilots' Association has consistently pressed the Indian government to modernise the antiquated system of air traffic control.

The government is right to order a judicial inquiry. But in India such inquiries are often subject to intense political pressure, which means that the real cause of the crash might never be made public.
Randhir Singh Bains,
Gants Hill, Essex

BEFORE the break-up of the former Soviet Union, airline pilots commonly did not fly outside Soviet airspace. They therefore had no reason to learn English, the language of international aviation.

With the break-up and liberalisation of the former Soviet republics, these same pilots are now able to fly out of their national borders and across international airspace, but their understanding of English is often limited and sometimes nonexistent. While technical difficulties may be to blame in this case, it is surprising that we have not had more such incidents.
Alexander Weir,
Villa Louvigny, Luxembourg

The right kind of aid money

ALEX DE WAAL makes many valid points about the need to regulate the use of aid money (Sorry St Bob, but it's time we banned aid, October 27). However, I think it is important to acknowledge that some aid money does "work".

There are many excellent people and organisations using participatory approaches to integrated, people-centred development. They aim to empower the poor so that they may have greater control over decisions that affect their lives. This is a strategy that encourages prevention rather than cure.

The organisation I work with continuously endeavours to improve the standard of the services we provide to our less fortunate partners. We also place great importance on sharing the knowledge that we generate through our own experiences, in order to assist other organisations.

I believe that the most effective way to regulate the use of aid money is through new attitudes to giving. Aid money is not, in itself, a gift to the poor. Aid money buys services which are supplied to the poor by intermediary developmental organisations. It may be easy to feel good about giving away a spare pound. It takes far more effort to take an interest in, and some responsibility for, the quality of the service delivery mechanisms. Many of us working with intermediary organisations would welcome such interest and support.
Cathy Shutt,
International Institute of Rural Reconstruction,
Manila, Philippines

Briefly

WHEN we see images of hungry people being beaten back from UN food warehouses, our instinct is to deliver aid. Some 1.5 million lives in Central Africa now depend on a response, while many more will be involved in chaos and deprivation should we not act.

Within Zaire there are forces that seek to benefit from the total breakdown of civil welfare systems. In nearby countries there are other clients of chaos whose agendas are built on terror. The warring factions use innocent civilians and human targets to create their power bases.

The international force is therefore going to have to take over more than camps, airfields, radio stations and roads. It will have to stop the armed and those who supply arms.
David H W Grubb,
Children's Aid Direct,
Reading, Berkshire

IN YOUR October 27 issue, an article on the finance page states that the Helms-Burton bill to punish Cuba was voted into law after Cuba shot down a "civilian jet". This gave the impression that Castro's air force mercilessly blasted a passenger plane out of the sky. The single-engine aircraft in question was piloted by a CIA-linked group called Brothers to the Rescue, whose purpose was to drop propaganda leaflets and issue other provocations. In the past, small private planes have been widely used by covert US-backed expatriate groups to commit acts of terrorism, such as setting fire to crops and strafing buildings. Brothers to the Rescue had also been warned repeatedly not to violate Cuban airspace.
Glenn Evwa,
Columbus, Georgia, USA

CAN anyone enlighten me as to how a 48-hour-week would affect the teaching profession? Several years ago a directive laid down the number of hours teachers were contracted to work. This was abandoned because teachers regularly exceeded these hours. Surveys have shown that many are working 55 to 70 hours a week. This results in tired and stressed teachers, many of whom are having to take early retirement on health grounds. When will teachers be allowed to exercise the right not to work more than 48 hours a week?
Clive Goodwin,
Southsea, Hampshire

BRIAN KENNEDY (Letter from Abuja, November 17) writes: "One wonders why everything stopped so suddenly . . ." It is an intriguing question but he offers no answer to it, which leaves one deeply frustrated. Is there a likelihood that he will give us the answer? Surely he could research a bit more and not leave us hanging in mid-story.
Duncan Cross,
Wolverhampton, West Midlands

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The Week

THE search for a new secretary-general to lead the United Nations has begun in earnest after the United States cast its veto to block Boutros Boutros-Ghali for a second term.
Comment, page 12

LIBYA is inviting Arabs of all nationalities to apply to settle permanently in the country, despite its expulsion of thousands of Sudanese and Palestinian workers last year.

ALLEGATIONS that the Belgian deputy prime minister, Elio di Rupo, procured sex with under-age boys began to disintegrate as the sole witness against him was discredited as a fantasist.

THIRTY-NINE people were killed and 80 injured when a fire swept through a high-rise block in Hong Kong.

A NEWLY created court under the World Trade Organisation in Geneva has agreed to hear a legal challenge to the US Helms-Burton law by the European Union. The US has threatened to disregard any ruling that goes against the law, which aims to penalise countries trading with Cuba.

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton declared a state of emergency in Puerto Rico after 20 people were killed and at least 80 injured in an explosion at a shoe shop in San Juan.

A COURT in Tasmania sentenced the mass murderer Martin Bryant to life imprisonment for shooting 35 people at a tourist resort on the island in April.

YASHAR KEMAL, one of Turkey's most famous authors, has fled his country and sough asylum in Sweden, according to friends and reports in the Swedish media.

A PROSECUTOR in Rome asked for Italy's prime minister, Romano Prodi, to be put on trial for corruption.
Lira back in ERM, page 23

THE fire that destroyed Venice's La Fenice opera house was started deliberately and with the intention of razing the building to the ground, according to an expert study.

THE Sandinista (FSLN) leader Daniel Ortega has refused to accept the official proclamation of his defeat in Nicaragua's presidential elections, heralding a fresh bout of political instability.

NIGERIA, facing pressure to restore democracy and respect human rights, freed three human rights lawyers after nearly a year in jail without trial.

Belarus leader gains free hand

David Hearst in Moscow

PRESIDENT Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus claimed a huge victory on Monday in a referendum to give him sweeping powers to reorganise parliament.

He claimed that his draft constitution had won more than 70 per cent support, to parliament's 7.9 per cent, on a turnout of 84 per cent of the electorate. The opposition said there had been widespread rigging.

He told parliament, which failed last week to ratify a Kremlin-brokered compromise between him and his parliamentary opponents, that the result of the referendum would be legally binding.

The new parliament, which will be formed by the end of the year, will be considerably weaker: one of its two chambers will consist of the president's local representatives.

At his victory press conference, Mr Lukashenko said: "It will be very hard for my opponents to insist there were violations . . . The overwhelming majorities won by all the president's questions speak for themselves."

Viktor Gonchar, who was head of the election commission until 10 days ago, said the turnout figure had been faked. "Even during the presidential campaign [in 1994], when political activity was at its highest, it was lower. The figures are simply fantastic." He was particularly sceptical of the last-minute "surge" in polling: in the last four hours, turnout jumped by 26 per cent.

Mr Lukashenko attributed the increase to people returning home from their dachas; Mr Gonchar said this effect had not been seen before.

Semyon Sharetsky, the Speaker of parliament, described the referendum as a farce. "Nobody knows the total number of ballot papers issued, because they were printed by the presidential administration itself."

Five members of the European parliament invited to Minsk by Mr Sharetsky were not allowed to watch the ballot papers being counted. Their leader, Herbert Bosch, said: "We saw some irregularities yesterday, but the question is whether the whole procedure is regular or not."

Opposition deputies are to press ahead with impeachment proceedings against Mr Lukashenko, which were due to resume this week. But he has warned the judges of the constitutional court that they will not be reappointed if they continue blocking his decisions.

It is not clear what else the opposition can do — Russia will not intervene on its behalf. The Russian leadership, the only outside force able to put pressure on the warring politicians in Belarus, drew back in despair last weekend to await the inevitable clash after the controversial constitutional referendum.

The Russian prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, blamed both the Belarussian parliament and Mr Lukashenko for the collapse of an agreement he brokered last week which took the fangs out of the referendum result.

Striking lorry drivers block the motorway into Bordeaux last week PHOTOGRAPH: REGIS DUVIGNAU

French lorry drivers step up strike blockade

Keith Harper and Alex Duval Smith

A BLOCKADE by French lorry drivers intensified on Monday when police threatened to use tear gas to disperse British and French truckers in Calais.

The warning by French police followed a blockade by British drivers when 20 truckers stranded at Calais port said they would not move until the French lifted their action. They backed down to allow traffic through when the police arrived after several tense minutes.

The French drivers appeared to be attempting to seal off leading land and sea routes to France, by blockading Calais and Boulogne and hardening their action on the German, Belgian and Spanish borders.

As their protest entered its ninth day, the French prime minister, Alain Juppé, urged haulage companies to concede to some of their demands for shorter working hours and retirement at the age of 55.

Petrol was running out across France, supermarkets were bereft of supplies and there were further reports of factories having to slow production.

The communist-dominated CGT union, aware that the drivers have widespread support, called for sympathy strikes on Wednesday. Five rail unions and one taxi drivers union also called on members to support the protest "in ways they judge suitable".

The drivers are protesting against their employers' failure to respect an agreement in 1994 to gradually reduce their working month to 230 hours — about 56 hours a week. They have now increased their demands and are seeking payment for the time they spend waiting for goods to be loaded, and retirement at 55.

Iraq agrees to deal on oil for food

Anthony Goodman in New York

IRAQ'S ambassador to the United Nations, Nizar Hamdoon, said on Monday that Baghdad had agreed to all UN conditions that had held up implementation of an oil-for-food deal and predicted oil could start flowing in December.

He was speaking to reporters after meeting Chinmaya Gharekhan, undersecretary-general of the UN, who heads a task force overseeing the deal which would permit the sale of $2 billion of Iraqi oil over six months on a renewable basis.

The deal, concluded between Iraq and the UN in May but delayed because of differences over how it should be carried out, was to help ease the effects on ordinary Iraqis of crippling economic sanctions imposed soon after President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

One of the obstacles has been Iraqi insistence on controlling the number, make-up and freedom of movement of UN observers who would monitor arrangements on the ground. "All the aspects of the MOU [memorandum of understanding signed in May] have been discussed and they have been agreed upon," Mr Hamdoon said, including the issue of UN observers.

Asked when Iraqi oil might begin to flow, he said: "December, I think, is the most likely time for the oil to start moving, because there is nothing else to impede the process."

"Iraq now is ready for the smooth and easy implementation of the MOU," Mr Hamdoon said, adding that he gave Mr Gharekhan a letter setting out "the official Iraqi acceptance" of the terms for the deal.

Mr Hamdoon said a pipeline leading from northern Iraq to Turkey, through which the bulk of the oil was due to pass, "will definitely be ready by the first week of December. If the pricing formula is approved — which we hope to get this week — then nothing else remains."

He was referring to action by the Security Council's Iraqi sanctions committee, which must approve a formula governing oil sales contracts. Iraq submitted a formula for December last week.

The sanctions committee failed to approve formulas for previous months because the United States put the issue on hold until the remaining problems had been worked out.

Diplomats said Washington was currently studying the latest pricing formula and so far was looking at it favourably. — *Reuter*

Clinton coaxes a reluctant China

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Manila and Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

BILL CLINTON moved closer to fulfilling one of his foreign policy priorities by agreeing last weekend to an exchange of visits with the Chinese president, Jiang Zemin.

Mr Clinton and Mr Jiang will hold summits in late 1997 and in 1998. The deal drew praise from Beijing and a sharp rebuke from the US human rights lobby.

Mr Clinton, who said he thought the meeting went very well, has made public his aim to pay the first presidential visit to Beijing since 1989. But the main US objective is to establish a framework for contacts to stabilise a relationship severely strained by disagreements on Taiwan, trade and human rights.

The US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, arranged the deal during a two-day trip to Beijing last week. In seven hours of talks with China's three top leaders, he stressed that "confrontation and containment is not the direction the United States is going with respect to China", and called for a new era of co-operation.

Mr Christopher's trip was itself the culmination of months of negotiation by senior administration officials, notably the national security adviser, Anthony Lake, to try to set the bilateral relationship on a more positive footing.

Chinese officials described the meeting as "friendly, positive and constructive".

Mr Clinton put China at the centre of US foreign policy for his second term last week, muting his concern for human rights and portraying China as a great power that will decide whether the 21st century brings peace or war.

In Canberra on the first leg of an Asian tour, he told the Australian parliament that Washington would keep 100,000 troops in the Pacific but did not seek to "contain" China's growing military and economic might.

"What the United States wants is to sustain an engagement with China," he said in his first major foreign policy speech since defeating Bob Dole.

Comment, page 12

Chechen rebels rejoice in freedom

James Meek in Moscow

A RECOVERING Boris Yeltsin defied his opponents' mantra — that leaders who start wars cannot stop them — when he accepted the final defeat of the Russian army in Chechenia last weekend, granting the rebels the freedom he spent two years and tens of thousands of lives trying to deny.

Cries of outrage from Russian nationalists and quiet triumph from Chechen rebels greeted his unexpected decision to withdraw the last of Moscow's troops from the separatist region.

A senior member of the separatist government in Chechenia and former rebel spokesman, Movladi Udugov, said Moscow accepting that it could not beat the Chechens militarily was "the greatest Russian victory in the Caucasus for 300 years".

The Chechen military commander, Aslan Maskhadov — who could be the future ruler of the region likely to be renamed "Ichkeria" — said: "We did not set ourselves the task of beating the Russian army. We fought to ensure that there was not a single Russian soldier on our territory, and I think we have achieved that aim."

The Kremlin continues to insist that Chechenia is part of the Russian Federation, and the territory stands little chance of being recognised by the outside world as a separate state.

The agreement signed in Moscow last Saturday between a rebel delegation and the Russian prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, says federal law will continue to operate in Chechenia until local elections in January 1997, and the rebels accept that no final decision on the territory's status will be made until the end of 2001.

But Mr Yeltsin's dramatic about-turn, ordering the withdrawal of the interior ministry's 101st brigade and the defence ministry's 205th brigade, brings to an end any pretence that Moscow controls Chechenia.

This fact was not lost on the president's nationalist opponents in parliament, who accused him of allowing the break-up of the Russian Federation, just as five years ago he helped dismantle the Soviet Union.

The leader of the radical nationalists, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, said the deal with the rebels must be cancelled if it meant the Russian constitution was not effective in Chechenia.

The Communists called it unconstitutional and at a special parliamentary session on Friday were expected to try to refer it to the constitutional court as a basis for impeaching Mr Yeltsin.

"What was signed was agreed with no one," said Gennady Zyuganov, head of the Popular-Patriotic Union of Russia coalition, which unites moderate communists and Soviet revivalists. "It was discussed nowhere, except perhaps in the close entourage of Mr Yeltsin, which has long failed to take account of Russia's interests and is pursuing the territorial destruction of our country."

The opposition's concern for the fate of ethnic Russians in Chechenia has some basis. But Mr Zyuganov has consistently underestimated the degree of Chechen hostility towards Russia, and failed to understand that today's demoralised, brutalised Russian armed forces are incapable of forcing peace on the region.

Mr Yeltsin's move leaves Moscow with the difficult task of negotiating terms with the rebels for the defence of ethnic Russians and compensation for war damage.

But the final troop withdrawal is likely to be popular with most Russians, who never wanted the conflict in the first place and resented the deaths of Russian conscripts more than the deaths of Chechen civilians.

Baltic rebels, page 7

E Timor rebels deny loss of support

John Aglionby in Jakarta

THE East Timor independence movement on Monday denied army claims that resistance to the Indonesian government was waning.

Major-General Abdul Rivai, chief of the military region that includes East Timor, said: "It is true there are still rebels, but there are less than 100 of them, perhaps only 80." Last year the military said there were more than 200 armed guerrillas operating in the hills and forests of East Timor.

Alfredo Ferreira, a spokesman in Australia for Fretilin, the guerrilla movement formed when Indonesia invaded the Portuguese colony, laughed when told of the statement. "Indonesia has been saying that sort of thing all along, right from the beginning," he said. "It was never true then and it isn't true now.

"Fretilin is not a movement that depends on its numbers to engage the enemy and at the moment I believe we have just under 1,000 men under arms. But we can recruit many more as the occasion and need demands."

Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 and annexed it the following year. The United Nations still recognises Portugal as the administrative power. Indonesia says it maintains a garrison of troops in East Timor. Independent sources say it numbers more than 7,000 and could be 10,000.

Gen Riavi said Carlos Belo, East Timor's Roman Catholic bishop and joint winner of the 1996 Nobel peace prize, could be instrumental in ending the conflict.



Bishop Belo hushes youths shouting independence slogans in the East Timor capital, Dili, on Monday PHOTOGRAPH: ENNY NURAHENI

Bishop Belo, widely known for mediating between the two sides in the past, told a news conference on Monday that he did not support either the integration of East Timor into Indonesia or the move for independence. He just wanted to improve the situation in the territory.

He denied accusing Indonesian soldiers of treating residents of East Timor like "scabby dogs".

Referring to an article in the German magazine Der Spiegel, he said that he had spoken in the interview of East Timor's situation since 1976, not just the present day, and that his words did not necessarily represent his personal views or experience.

"As a bishop I have a moral duty to speak for the voice of the poor and the simple people who, when intimidated or terrorised, cannot defend themselves or make their suffering voiced," he said.

John Palmer in Brussels adds: The European Union has decided to proceed with direct economic aid to civil organisations in East Timor, in the face of strong diplomatic protests by the Indonesian government. EU foreign ministers authorised the commission to prepare aid projects for health, education, water and sanitation.

But the Irish presidency of the EU circulated a letter received from the government in Jakarta warning that the EU's action could have grave consequences for East Timor. The letter said that the proposed EU aid could jeopardise negotiation between Portugal and Indonesia.

Officials play numbers game in Zaire

Chris McGreal in Kigali

LAST week American and United Nations officials studied the same satellite photos of the same tracts of eastern Zaire and came up with entirely contradictory conclusions. The Americans saw almost nothing. The UN spotted 750,000 miserable souls being driven in circles.

As the international debate shifts from what can be done to assist the Rwandan Hutu refugees still in Zaire to whether they even exist, the Rwandan government and its allies appear ever more willing to write them off. Western military chiefs in Germany last weekend were unable to agree whether there was any need for foreign intervention in eastern Zaire.

The Tutsi-dominated government in Rwanda and its Zairean rebel comrades in Goma say there are no more refugees. The US took the same view, claiming it could find no evidence of the missing hundreds of thousands in its satellite photos. It later admitted having spotted 200,000 people with aerial flights.

Yet the UN found nearly four times as many "lost" refugees. It said people were spread across several hundred kilometres, from around Goma, north of Lake Kivu, to Bukavu at the bottom of the lake. Another mass — probably mainly Burundians — was spotted south of Uvira on the Burundi border.

About 300,000 refugees are gathering around Walikale, 120km west of Goma, driven by Zairean army units retreating from the rebel offensive toward the city of Kisangani, missionaries said. A similar number of refugees are on the move far south of Bukavu, probably including Zaireans who fled the rebel occupation.

The UN said another 175,000 refugees were encamped at Nyumbi, on the west bank of Lake Kivu, with units of the Hutu militias chased from the camps by the rebels and the Rwandan army 10 days ago.

Most of the "lost" refugees fled their camps a month ago. Since then they have been living off the land and kept moving by the fighting. A few individuals who have reached safety report deaths from starvation, exhaustion and disease.

Yet the Rwandan government and Zairean rebels continue to deny they exist, to avert military intervention in eastern Zaire.

There may be other motives. The influx of 500,000 Hutus over the past week is putting extraordinary pressure on the Rwandan authorities' resources, especially housing. Rwanda is appealing for $700 million to help pay for the resettlement of refugees, money it does not want to see diverted to intervention in Zaire.

The Rwandan position has strong backing from the Americans, who helped stall proposals for intervention at the UN Security Council, and vacillated when asked to help track the refugees by satellite.

American diplomats in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, support the Rwandan government claim that there never were 1 million refugees in eastern Zaire, and that those who have returned constitute the overwhelming bulk of the Hutus who fled two years ago.

Whatever the real figures of those who crossed into Zaire in 1994, there is no doubt the same number have not returned to Rwanda. The exodus to Goma two years ago took three days of solid mass movement, cramming through the border post and filling every space in town.

As they left Goma 10 days ago, the main flow lasted less than two days, without the same crush. It could not have accounted for much more than half those who tramped into Goma in 1994. And that leaves hundreds of thousands of other Rwandans who fled into Bukavu unaccounted for.

Meanwhile Tutsi rebels massacred more than 300 Rwandan and Burundian Hutu refugees at a camp 40km south-west of the regional capital Bukavu, Zaireans said on Monday.

Residents of nearby Kakinda village and a survivor said that on November 17 up to 40 rebels gathered 310 refugees at Chimanga camp, saying they would be repatriated, and then killed them.

● The British government last week launched a new inquiry into arms trafficking following widespread concern that UK-based companies may have arranged the supply of weapons to former Rwanda government forces implicated in genocide.

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OJ changes his alibi story

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

OJ SIMPSON faced questions on Monday about why he changed his story over his alibi on the night his ex-wife was murdered.

During the criminal trial last year, in which he was acquitted of stabbing to death Nicole Brown Simpson, aged 35, and her friend Ronald Goldman, aged 25, he had explained that he cut his finger rummaging for a cell phone in his Ford Bronco just before going to the airport.

But during his second day of giving evidence in the civil suit against him, Daniel Petrocelli, counsel for the Goldman family, brandished telephone records and insisted that Mr Simpson had called his former girlfriend, model Paula Barbieri, at 10.03pm on the night of the murders, from his cell phone while standing outside the Bronco.

Mr Simpson initially told police that he called from the vehicle, which he also denied using that night. The two were killed some time between 10 and 11 that Sunday night in June 1994, at Nicole's house, a five-minute drive from the Simpson mansion. He now claims he removed the phone from the vehicle and called from his garden.

Mr Petrocelli asked: "So your story now is that you didn't make this call from the Bronco? You're now saying you took it out of the Bronco hours before?" Mr Simpson replied: "Correct."

Mr Petrocelli: "You don't want it to be there [in the Bronco]. If it's there at 11, then it's there at 10. And if it's there at 10 it ruins your alibi because you're in the Bronco and not at home [as he insists]."

Mr Simpson, who kept his temper during Mr Petrocelli's intense questioning, replied: "That's not true."

Earlier Mr Simpson denied receiving a telephone message from Ms Barbieri ending their relationship. The families of Nicole and Ronald Goldman argue that he was upset and enraged by being dumped by Ms Barbieri, which he blamed on Nicole.

Muslims gather to answer call of Mammon

Chris Nuttall in Ankara

IT BEGAN with readings from the Koran, then continued with the reciting of statistics of gross domestic product. The Second International Business Forum for Muslim industrialists and politicians, which ended in Istanbul last week, tried to mix religious doctrine with economic policy in an effort to create an Islamic common market.

It could happen, although the struggle between Mammon and Muslim has always stood in the way in the past.

The Turkish prime minister, Necmettin Erbakan, a leading advocate of an Islamic bloc, declared: "It's about time the Islamic people, all 1.5 billion of them, gave themselves a good shaking," he said. "Co-operation among Muslim countries should be increased immediately."

According to the statistics he quoted, only 10 per cent of the trade of Islamic countries is with other Islamic states. It should be 90 per cent, he said.

The whole of the Islamic world has only a fifth of the share of world trade enjoyed by the European Union, although it has five times its population.

Mr Erbakan called for an end to the practice of conducting international trade in dollars. "If a just world is to be established, then every country should use its own currency in trading," he said.

Mr Erbakan has been criticised for his economic naïvety. He has mooted a revaluation of the Turkish lira to establish parity with the US dollar. It currently stands at 99,900 to the dollar.

The first Islamist leader in the 73-year history of the Turkish republic, he is also trying to create a Muslim equivalent of the Group of Seven. This he calls the M8, made up of Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. Their foreign ministers are expected to meet in the New Year.

But Mr Erbakan appears to have put on hold a more practical alternative for an Islamic bloc. The Economic Co-operation Organisation was founded by Turkey, Pakistan and Iran more than 30 years ago.

It lay moribund until 1992, when it was extended to include Afghanistan and the six former Soviet Republics of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, making it the largest non-Arab Islamic organisation. But little has been done to activate it.

Mr Erbakan clearly has bigger ideas, hoping to bind the economic powerhouses of East Asia into some kind of union, and include Africa.

But Indonesia and Malaysia will always look to their own regional trading organisations — Apec and Asean — before any vague alliance of Islamic nations, and Egypt has been more occupied with a Middle Eastern free-trade zone.

There was no little enthusiasm for an Islamic trading bloc at the Istanbul forum, however. Turkey may seem ripe to lead such an Ottoman revival, still sitting at the junction of East and West, mixing Muslim and secular, its government a coalition of parties representing Western-style free-market policies with Islamic credentials.

But Mr Erbakan's Welfare Party and the True Path party of the former prime minister, Tansu Ciller, have been pulling in different directions. Mrs Ciller has been campaigning for Turkey's integration into the European Union, which Mr Erbakan seems to regard as a Christian club, to be shunned by Muslims.

UAE to ban marriage to foreigners

Kathy Evans

THE United Arab Emirates has decided to join the growing number of Arab Gulf countries that have banned marriages with foreigners.

The prohibition will come into effect in the new year after approval by the president, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, according to the director of the UAE's Marriage Fund, Jamal al-Bah. The fund gives a subsidy to UAE men willing to embark on the expensive business of marrying local women.

"The new law will rationalise marriage to foreigners . . . it is close to a ban," Mr al-Bah explained. "It will allow marriages between Gulf Co-operation Council [GCC] nationals because of family links and with fourth-generation relatives in Arab countries."

The GCC covers six Gulf countries, including Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which have already have imposed similar restrictions on marriage with foreigners.

Like a number of other Gulf states, the Emirates' population is dominated by foreigners, who now make up 80 per cent of the total. The demographic problem has been compounded by the tendency of UAE men to marry foreigners.

UAE men complain that local women have become too expensive to marry. Brides' families frequently demand not only a cash dowry but also gifts of gold and wedding receptions for several thousand people, lasting several days. The average cost of a wedding is $75,000.

Two years ago the president, Sheikh Zayed, tried to overcome the problem of unmarried women by establishing the Marriage Fund. Each man marrying a local woman is given $20,000 to offset wedding costs.

But local women are fiercely competitive in their bridal extravagance. Couturiers say that most wedding dresses are so heavily encrusted with pearls and gems that they weigh as much as 25kg. A Dubai jeweller said his customers spent an average of $58,000 on gifts of gold for the bride.

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Gingrich extends the hand of co-operation



The US this week

Martin Walker

WHILE President Clinton was snorkelling over Australia's Great Barrier Reef last week and playing golf with Greg Norman, the politics which will determine his second term were taking shape in Washington. So far Clinton looks like finding more friends among the Republicans than among the Democrats.

After some harrumphing among conservative commentators and grandstanding congressmen like Peter King from Long Island, Newt Gingrich was easily re-elected Speaker of the House for the next session. *Since he faces several ethical challenges in the coming term,* and has been chastened by the loss of 10 seats, which shrinks his Republican majority perilously, Gingrich will return as an older, wiser and rather more distracted Speaker. He seems to be taking seriously the fashionable talk about governing in a bipartisan manner.

"President Clinton, as candidate, *was for a balanced budget, for* smaller government, for tax cuts, for welfare reform, and for an all-out effort to stop drugs. That's a ground where it seems to me we can do a lot of work together because we share the common direction.

"If the last Congress was the Confrontation Congress, this one will be the Implementation Congress, and we will be very pleased two years from now at how much we have implemented, working together and putting the nation first," Gingrich said in his first speech after beating back the challenge from Republican rebels to be re-elected Speaker for the next two years. "We bear the unusual burden of reaching out to a Democratic president and saying 'Together, we are in fact going to find common ground'."

He then lived up to this statement, allowing the Democrats extra seats on the important appropriations and commerce committees, which was decent of him. Moreover, the economic projections for the *next few years of budget deficits are* suddenly looking more rosy, thanks to better than expected tax revenues and the continued health of the economy. This has already shrunk the current fiscal year's deficit from $130 billion at the start of the year to $107 billion. And by 2002, the target date the Republicans have set to achieve a balanced budget, the gap now looks to be less than *$150 billion, rather than the* $260 billion the Republicans had expected.

Meanwhile Gingrich's offer of bipartisan co-operation was being *weighed by the deeply divided factions* among the Democrats, who are now warring through their pollsters. On the left is Dr Stanley Greenberg of Yale, who was Clinton's *pollster in 1992. His re*searches into the exit poll data persuade him that Clinton was re-elected last month as a traditional Democrat who protected the welfare state and education from Republican cuts.

"It is the downscale, not the upscale, electorate that gave the Democrats the opportunity to win in 1996," Greenberg concludes, in a re*port commissioned by the liberal* Democrats' new organisation, the Campaign for America's Future. Financed largely by the unions, it is run by Jesse Jackson's close adviser, Robert Borosage.

Another of the important institutions of the left, the Economic Policy Institute, produced a parallel analysis by Roy Texeira, author of the important 1992 Brookings study, *The Disappearing American Voter*. He found that "three-quarters of Clinton's support came from non-college-educated voters, and that his support was primarily motivated by the economy and jobs, Medicare and social security, and education".

Clinton's vote rose by 9 points among the voters with only a high school graduation diploma (and by 13 points among women in this cate*gory). It rose 7 points by those with* some college education, yet rose only 3 points among those with a college degree.

"Many observers credit Clinton's victory this year to his move to the centre as a New Democrat. But does the public actually consider Clinton to be a New Democrat?" Texeira asks. "The polling data show that during the period when *Clinton built his decisive lead over* Bob Dole in the polls, the percentage of the public that thought Clinton was a new kind of Democrat actually decreased, reaching the lowest levels of his presidency . . . Clinton's political resurgence was based most fundamentally on defence of 'Old Democrat' programmes — Medicare, Medicaid, education and the environment."

By contrast, Clinton's pollster for 1996, the Harvard-educated Mark Penn, has just published a report which comes to entirely the opposite conclusion: that Clinton was re-elected because he convinced the voters that he was a New Democrat who was able to run against both the Republicans and the traditional liberal Democratic party.

The Democrats failed to regain a majority in Congress because they were not as successful as Clinton in convincing the voters that they were New Democrats, Penn argued. His analysis was commissioned by the centrist Democratic Leadership Council, which invented the idea of the New Democrat in the first place.

"The Congressional Democrats systematically deprived themselves of the greatest edge the party controlling the White House can have — a successful economy," Penn concluded. "They focused relentlessly on wage stagnation and the perceived lack of good jobs in their effort to attract voters without college degrees."

Polling analyses are highly influential in modern US politics, and these conflicting reports represent the opening shots in the looming *Democratic debate. The clash will* come to a head in 1999, as Vice-President Al Gore, a New Democrat and *founding member of the Demo*cratic Leadership Council (along with Clinton), reaches for his inheritance as the party's next presidential candidate.



His most likely challenger is the party's leader in the House, Congressman Dick Gephardt, who is using the Greenberg data to insist that the Democrats must stick by their traditional constituency of *high school graduates* and those most vulnerable to any increase in the unemployment rate.

"Just which Democratic party is it we are trying to co-operate with? Is it the new guys or the old band?" grinned Republican party chairman Haley Barbour, as the battling pollsters laid out their data.

Some piquancy is added to the pollsters' debate by the role of *Greenberg, who in 1992 was far* more than just the pollster to the Clinton campaign — he was, in fact, a crucial adviser.

Greenberg, who is married to the liberal Democratic congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, had made his name as the laureate of Macomb County, a suburb of Detroit which seemed in the 1980s to sum up the Democratic predicament. The voters were white, modestly prosperous working class and lower middle class, with many Catholics and people from ethnic eastern European backgrounds.

THEY WERE natural and traditional Democratic voters, many of them union members, but they voted for Ronald Reagan in their droves. They responded to his patriotism, to his attacks on welfare, and abandoned a Democratic party they saw drifting too close to the concerns of the inner city and its inhabitants. They were the archetypal Reagan Democrats, and Greenberg's studies of Macomb County became the gospel of the Clinton campaign of 1992, which was determined to win them back.

In the April before the 1992 campaign, when Clinton was becoming assured of the Democratic party nomination, but was below both George Bush and Ross Perot in the opinion polls, Greenberg then launched the project which put Clinton into the *White House*.

"This report of the 'general election project' recommends a fundamental re-thinking of your campaign to reflect the new political realities and new phase of the campaign and most important, to address the debilitating image that is *dragging us down,"* his *report* began. "The core problem of the Clinton candidacy is Clinton's essential 'political' nature."

Greenberg went on to list the six main conclusions from a series of focus groups:

- Clinton is not real. He is packaged.
- Clinton is privileged, like the Kennedys.
- *Clinton can't stand up to the spe*cial interests.
- Clinton cannot be the candidate of change.
- Clinton's for himself, not for people.
- Clinton's message-ideas are discounted.

"The campaign has to take radical steps to depoliticise Bill Clinton," the report notes and goes on to ex*plain how and why. Greenberg and* the campaign's media director Frank Greer had spent days poring over the gloomy and often contradictory reports of focus groups, trying to understand why Clinton was not connecting.

Greenberg had a hunch that while the political class knew about Clinton even before the primaries began, the public's first view of Clinton *was in mid-scandal in New* Hampshire. That was their image of him, a man constantly weaving to talk his way out of trouble. And in the absence of any counter-message, that image was taking firm hold.

Greenberg tried an experiment, making a brief video biography of Clinton with a few key facts. Here was a man born into a poor home, widowed mother, public schools, standing up to a drunken stepfather, scholarships to Oxford and Yale but then came back home to be a reformist governor who created jobs, built schools and balanced his budgets.

Greenberg first ran a quick poll, asking the focus groups to list Bush, Perot and Clinton in order of preference. Clinton ran last. Then he offered the biography, and afterwards ran his standard tests of Clinton's views and speeches.

His first group contained 10 middle-aged, middle-class women from Pennsylvania. He polled them again. Clinton had gone from last to top in their preferences. Greenberg ran the same test on middle-aged men, blue-collar workers, elderly couples, and got the same result every time.

"Bingo," said Greer. "It's the magic bullet. They didn't know this *guy. All we gotta do is tie down the* American people and beat them over the head with his biography."

The rest, thanks also to Clinton's extraordinary campaigning skills, is history. But it also points to the fundamental hollowness of the pollsters' current debate. Clinton won the White House, in 1992 and in 1996, because he was Clinton: a campaigner, a flawed charmer, an *engaging rascal whose very slipper*iness tended to devalue the importance of the ideological themes of the New Democrat on which he campaigned.

IN CLINTON'S pragmatic view, the political purpose of the New Democrat ideology is to win over centrist, swing and independent voters to yield the essential margin of *victory. The researches of Green*berg in 1992 helped Clinton to do that, but even though his findings are wholly justified by the data, they would not help the Democrats to carry the White House in future, or even to regain control of the Congress over the next four years.

The Democrats are a coalition, and need the insights of both Greenberg and Penn to guide them *back to being the natural* party of government. The greatest threat to the party over the forthcoming political season is continued division, while the Republicans have learnt their lesson and are trying to sound reasonable again.

Of course, Gingrich being Gingrich, that may not last. After his thoroughly sensible speech about common ground and bipartisan leg*islative reforms, he went off* into one of those grandiose socio-cultural riffs which threaten much but signify little.

"This country will never again be healthy if we don't have the courage to confront the spiritual and cultural and moral deficit that is an even greater threat to our future than the economic deficit," he intoned.

If Gingrich goes on like that, and *the Democrats continue* to do internal battle through their polling champions, then the only winner will be Clinton. He has learnt over the past two years the tactics of divide-and-rule, and now has the glittering new power of *line-item* veto over the details of any legislation that the Congress sends to him. No wonder he felt he could take time off to play golf with Greg Norman.



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Caught between Soviet devil and Baltic sea

James Meek in Pskov *reports on the rise of* nationalism in Russia's disaffected border region

IN THIS town, so the businessmen grumble, even the mafia is poor. "Do you know how many Mercedes 300s there are in Pskov? Only five!" declared the factory director indignantly, trying not to spill his vodka as the overnight express wobbled on its 12-hour journey between Moscow and this stricken western outpost of the Russian Federation.

Pskov has one of the lowest standards of living in the country, factories without orders, pensioners without pensions, locally garrisoned paratroopers without pay and two loudly independent Baltic countries where the road to the seaside used to be.

So, when the messiah of Russian nationalism, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, came preaching prosperity, the voters came out to listen.

In an election result that has shocked the Russian political establishment and provoked unease in the Baltic states, a 33-year-old political unknown from Mr Zhirinovsky's *radical* LDPR party, Yevgeny Mikhailov, has won a crushing victory over the Kremlin's candidate, to become the new governor of Pskov region.

The election was fought on bread-and-sausage issues. But the readiness with which the people of Pskov have handed the powerful gubernatorial post to a party that calls for the restoration of Russia's Soviet-era *borders is bound to intensify the* desperate desire of neighbouring Latvia and Estonia to join Nato — the very step that Russian nationalists warn could provoke conflict.

Mr Mikhailov, a small, self-confident local man who has spent the past three years as an LDPR member of the Duma (parliament) in Moscow, said sanctions were likely if the Baltic states persisted on their present course.

"At some point, if the Baltic countries don't end their current policies, including their attempts to join Nato, trade sanctions will arise of their own accord, whatever I or the LDPR might want," he said.

"It'll be bad for Pskov, because our economic interests favour co-operation. There is no point in talking about limiting trade now because, for one thing, I couldn't bring it about and, for another, it would threaten the economic well-being of the region I answer for. But as a politician I forecast sanctions will be imposed."

Mr Mikhailov, who dived straight into politics after graduating from Moscow university's history department, split with the liberal anti-Communist movement of the late perestroika years after the USSR's brutal and clumsy attempt in 1991 to prevent Lithuania from breaking away. He took the side of Soviet troops who killed 14 people during an attack on the republic's TV tower.

Though he now presents himself as a moderate, his language in a book published last year, Burden Of An Imperial Nation, was that of an irredentist Machiavelli wannabe.

Russia's attempts to recover the Baltic countries, he argued, should begin with open and covert support for attempts by ethnic Russians in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to set up their own self-governing *statelets*.

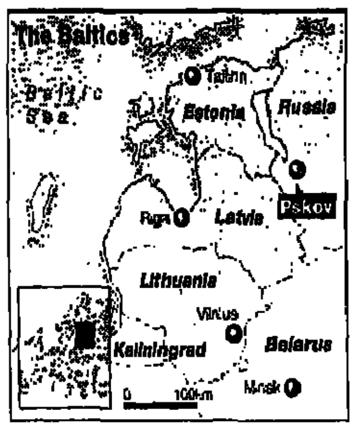
"Having created a series of islands of Russian statehood . . . these new territorial acquisitions should be used first to settle the problem of refugees and then, when the time is right, to include them within the empire," he wrote in a chapter headed "The Third World War and the Task of Russian National-Liberalism".

At the Latvian consulate in Pskov, consul Valery Zubko chuckled over a video of the Zhirinovsky propaganda blitzkrieg on the region which, most local pundits say, turned the tide in an election that *Mr Mikhailov could never have won* by himself.

"Mikhailov never expected to come to power," said Mr Zubko. "He's not ready for it."

With its sleek, minimalist office furniture, carpet tiles and immaculate white walls, a capsule of Scandinavian modernity among the damp, peeling blocks and cratered roads of Pskov, the consulate is an expres*sion of the way Balts see themselves* in relation to the Russians. They think they are smarter, richer, harder-working, more Western, better organised. The staff even have their own kitchen rather than risk lunching at the Russian hotel around the corner.

Pskovians who used to nip across the formal Soviet boundary into Estonia or Latvia to go shopping now need to go through a complex and expensive visa application process. As local newspaper editor Vladlen Smirnov put it, it is easier to go shopping in Turkey.



Yevegny Mikhailov shocked the Kremlin and provoked alarm in the Baltic states by his victory in the election for governor of the Pskov region PHOTO: JAMES HILL

Riga shows no sign of giving ethnic Russians in Latvia — a third of the population — full citizenship rights and has refused to renounce its hopeless claim to a slice of Pskov territory. Mr Zubko said there was no reason to worry. "Mikhailov won't be determining the policies of Russia. He might interfere with the improvement in our relations with Russia but the final decision will not be his."

YET, over at 85 Soviet Street, Pskov headquarters of the LDPR, they keep faith with a great Russian future and nurse bitterness over the past. The walls of a campaign war room are crowded with a gallery of me-with-Zhirinovsky snapshots and Mikhailov memorabilia, including an oil painting of the new governor as Peter the *Great*.

Within the room, a young former Baltic Russian claimed it was the Lithuanians who began shooting first in 1991.

"I had the misfortune to be born in Lithuania," said Maxim Smirnov, aged 19, an LDPR youth organiser. "Zhirinovsky was the only one who didn't betray us. He was the only one who didn't forget there were Russians in Lithuania."

Commentators argue that voters in Pskov had little interest in the LDPR's Baltic dreams. The electorate clearly believed that Mr Zhirinovsky's claim that his control of a large block of votes in Parliament would mean extra government money for them if they backed his candidate. On top of that, Mr Mikhailov's main opponent, the sitting governor Vladislav Tumanov, was a haughty, despised, ineffectual figure.

"Maybe you still don't understand the soul of the Russian," said Yuri Kraubner, head of a regional union of small business people.

"People understand they couldn't have a worse governor than Tumanov and if they vote for Zhirinovsky's man they'll laugh more often. People enjoy Zhirinovsky's speeches. Laughter is healthy. It provides vitamins."

Editor Smirnov ridiculed the LDPR leader's rhetoric. "People vote with their stomachs," he said. "Whether there'll really be a march to the Indian Ocean I don't know. Whether we'll go into the Baltics or not — it's hardly likely to happen. He says these things to shock the public. People vote for a hunk of bread."

Yet the argument that Pskov voters ignored the LDPR's jingoistic rallying cries and voted on purely economic grounds is not convincing. There is an underlying belief *here that Estonia, Latvia and Lithua*nia could not survive without Russian raw materials and energy, and that sooner or later they will beg to return to Moscow's embrace.

What in a weak Russia appears a protest vote could, in a stronger future Russia, be something more destabilising.

Pskov has already returned Mr Mikhailov once before as its Mem*ber of Parliament*, and in 1995 voted for the notorious TV propagandist Alexander Nevzorov, who made a short film in 1991 presenting the heavily armed Soviet troops facing Lithuanian civilians as outnumbered heroes.

Vladlen Smirnov admitted that democracy — "the last illusion of the Russian intellectual", as Mr Mikhailov called it in his book — was growing strangely on Russian soil. "Our countrymen could get up in the morning with a hangover and go out and vote for the devil," he said.

China tackles moral rot with a smile

Andrew Higgins in Beijing

LI SULI, bus conductor and rising star of China's revived cult of the model worker, is far too busy these days being a celebrity to turn up for work.

On the number 21 bus that was her springboard to stardom, rare is the passenger who cannot tell of the exploits of China's most diligent transport worker; how she rises before dawn, smiles all day and studies into the night.

But rarer still is the passenger who has seen her in the flesh.

On a recent bone-shaking journey across Beijing only one passenger could claim to have witnessed the model worker at work. "I saw her once but that was months ago. It was before she became famous."

Ms Li, aged 35 and mother to the requisite single child, has become chief cheerleader in a national campaign for rectitude and political obedience, an ill-defined pot-pourri of virtues known in Communist Party jargon as spiritual civilisation.

"At a time of increasing selfishness and indifference she has created a fertile pasture of warmth and human feeling," said the Beijing Youth Daily, which calls Ms Li the "messenger of love".

Such a message might have worked in the 1950s but has little relevance today. An irreverent rock guitarist recently featured the model bus conductor in a rendition of Beautiful Girl — and was banned from performing for three years. He was accused of making "unsavoury gestures" on top of a piano.

Across Beijing, citizens are being bombarded with the slogan "study Li Suli, achieve first-class service". Ms Li, meanwhile, is too busy preaching to bother much with practice.

"I take this bus every day and she has never sold me a ticket," said an elderly passenger on her route. "But I watch her on television all the time. She smiles a lot and has a very nice bus. Not like this old thing."

The gap between reality and *fantasy is a recurring feature of* China's spasmodic campaigns to promote model workers — a gap that may explain why the party usually prefers its heroes dead or fictional. The most famous of the genre is Lei Feng, a 1960s paragon of the People's Liberation Army who declared himself a "rustless screw of the revolution" and then perished *when a telephone pole fell on* his head.

"As far as the party is concerned, the only good model worker is a dead model worker. Only a corpse is entirely safe," said Geremie Barme, a scholar of contemporary Chinese culture at the Australian National University. "Living models have always been problematic. So long as someone is still alive they can always say or do the wrong thing."

To protect Ms Li from such perils, the Beijing Municipal Communist Party acts as her agent and chaperon. Its propaganda department fixes her photo opportunities and interviews, and arranges her road*shows and speaking tours*.

Ms Li now has only one real rival at the summit of Chinese political correctness, a plodding model plumber from Shanghai called Xu Hu.

"She has to go to many meetings and does not have much time for ordinary work," explained Li Jian, bus depot supervisor and keeper of a permanent *shrine to the conductor at* Beijing's gargantuan railway station, starting point for the number 21.

A hall has been set aside to house photographs and mementoes marking the milestones in Ms Li's excruciatingly mundane life. The exhibition kicks off with a picture of her induction into the Communist Party in 1988, taking an oath of loyalty, fist clenched before a red flag.

Perpetually smiling and relentlessly good-natured, Ms Li has joined an exclusive pantheon of heroes. The concept of national model workers was first developed in the 1950s but is now being dusted off by President Jiang Zemin to counter the *excesses created by Deng* Xiaoping's credo of "to get rich is glorious".

Most Chinese would applaud any serious attempt to stop the country's moral rot. Model workers, though, inspire more despair than hope.

"Chinese bureaucrats speak to the country in a vernacular that has virtually nothing to do with the reality of life in modern China," said Mr Barme. "They treat their own people like cretins. Many are deeply concerned about the terrible corruption and moral collapse. But the party has neither the mechanisms nor even the rhetoric to deal with reality. All it can do is take flight into the fantasies of the past."

Door to talks held ajar for Sinn Fein

David Sharrock

THE Government has left open the door to Sinn Fein's entry into talks if a "genuine and unequivocal" IRA ceasefire is declared.

Senior republicans at a Sinn Fein special conference in the Irish Republic at the weekend heard Martin McGuinness say that he would move heaven and earth to get a renewed ceasefire if John Major were prepared to declare that he would not treat it like the last one.

The leader of the Social and Democratic Labour Party, John Hume, said a new ceasefire was "very possible" if the Government responded positively to proposals drawn up by him and *Gerry Adams*, which include the direct admission of Sinn Fein into talks and a time-frame of six months in which these would take place.

Sinn Fein also wants confidence-building measures, such as the release of prisoners and a guarantee that the decommissioning of weaponry will not be a block on progress in the talks.

But the Northern Ireland minister Michael Ancram said that he was "not in the business of seeking any compromise to achieve a ceasefire . . . [or] of changing policy in order to achieve a ceasefire which ought never to have been ended in the first place".

He avoided *comment* on demands for Sinn Fein's direct entry into the Stormont talks by sticking to a formula of words which leaves the initiative in the IRA's hands.

"The ball is very firmly in their court but this time, if there is a ceasefire which is going to bring Sinn Fein into the talks, then we have to know that that ceasefire is genuine and unequivocal.

"It has to be consistent both in word and deed to achieve the degree of confidence . . . that this time it's for real and this time it's for good, which patently last time it was not," he said.

Pressed on how long it would take for the IRA to establish its bona fides, Mr Ancram said: "If there are *actions which are inconsistent* with the declaration of a ceasefire obviously they have to be taken into account."

That means that the Government's own shopping list of demands includes an immediate halt to IRA activities such as punishment beatings, robberies, "dummy run" attacks and the targeting of security and political personnel.

In recent weeks the RUC has amassed significant intelligence, *including computer disks outlining* IRA targets.

The war of words continued with a counter-statement from the Sinn Fein chairman, Mitchel McLaughlin, that the Government could not absolve itself of the "primary responsibility' of restoring the peace process. "John Major holds the key to peace in Ireland and he knows exactly how that can be achieved."

Although the chances of seeing another IRA ceasefire before Christmas are slim, it is just possible that Mr Major might yet perfect a strategy to halt a renewed bombing campaign.

Last week a massive car bomb was defused outside RUC headquarters *in Londonderry*.

Mr McGuinness was quick to condemn the attack by the hawkish republican splinter group the Continuity Army Council.

● The BBC is to risk provoking an embarrassing political row by producing a documentary on the history of the modern IRA. The series is to be screened next autumn and will examine the development of the IRA and its relationship with Sinn Fein since 1969.

Reynolds wins bitter victory

Maggie O'Kane

THE former Irish prime minister, Albert Reynolds, faces a legal bill of up to £1 million, despite being libelled by the Sunday Times.

After a 24-day hearing and 18 hours of deliberations, a High Court *jury in London last week found in* favour of Mr Reynolds but awarded "zero" damages, later increased to 1p after the judge ruled that he was entitled to nominal damages given the jury's verdict.

Mr Reynolds, aged 64, sued the Sunday Times after a November 1994 story headed "Goodbye gombeen man. Why a fib too far proved fatal".

It focused on the reasons for his resignation as Taoiseach and was, *said Mr Reynolds*, a "horrible, vicious, vilifying article which it was unnecessary to write". The paper defined a gombeen man, derived from Gaelic, as "the local fixer with a finger in every pie".

The jury in Court 13 decided by 10 to one that even though the newspaper had been wrong to write that he had lied and misled the Dail over the events leading to his resignation in 1994, it had not acted maliciously. It had simply repeated allegations made in the privileged surroundings of the Irish parliament.

The article alleged Mr Reynolds had not given the full facts to the Dail when he defended Harry Whelehan — then recently promoted from attorney-general to president of the Irish high court — against criticism for delays in extra*diting a paedophile priest, Brendan* Smyth, to Northern Ireland.

Mr Reynolds denied deceiving his Labour coalition partner, Dick Spring, about his knowledge of the case. He said he had accepted in good faith Mr Whelehan's explanation that he had not seen the relevant file on the case or been told about it, and that it was a complex issue with no precedent.

Mr Reynolds said afterwards: "I took this case to clear my good *name and uphold my reputation.* I am pleased that the jury agreed that I am not a liar."

The Sunday Times, which had published a much more gentle version of the article in its Irish edition, denied libel, pleading qualified privilege and justification.

It argued that Mr Reynolds had known enough the day before he spoke to the Dail to form the view that Mr Whelehan should not be sworn in as president of the high court.



The Week in Britain James Lewis

Battle over tax fuels election fever

THE TORY victory in the 1992 general election had much to with the party's success in frightening the voters with Labour's "tax and spend" reputation. Evidently hoping that the same trick will work again, Tory strategists used the run-up to this week's Budget statement to launch a tome listing 89 "major spending pledges" by Labour which, they calculated, would cost the average family £1,200 a year in extra taxes.

The shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown, who has gone to great lengths to show that he would keep an iron hand on spending, responded with an immediate and detailed rebuttal of the claims and condemned the "Tory lie machine" for trying to repeat its 1992 performance. The only Labour proposals that would require extra spending, *he said, would be paid for by a* £5 billion windfall tax on the privatised utilities, or by making better use of existing resources.

Although Labour is acutely aware of its vulnerability on public spending, the Tory claims were generally derided as being ludicrously wide of the mark — an over-the-top propaganda stunt that could herald a long and dirty election campaign.

Labour's proposals are, in general, impossible to cost, either be*cause of their ambiguity* or because they are hedged around with "ifs" and "buts", or weasel words such as "as resources allow" and "over time".

The Tories said that the 89 commitments had been gleaned from speeches and comments made by Labour's leader, Tony Blair, and his frontbenchers over the past two years. But Mr Brown is insistent that the only Labour commitment can be found in the anodyne Road to the Manifesto document.

Both parties may, in any case, be wrong in assuming that fiscal continence wins elections. A study carried out by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, as part of the annual British Attitudes Survey, showed a majority of voters to be in *favour* of higher spending on health and education, even if it meant higher taxes.

Comment, page 12

For those with access to the Internet, Budget details are on http://www.guardian.co.uk/budget/

SOME traditionalist Labour MPs are less than happy about the way their "new" party has ditched or watered down some cherished Socialist objectives such as a renationalised railway system, a minimum wage, and improved retirement pensions. Their scope for dissent, however, is to be severely limited.

New rules of conduct will pro*hibit them from doing anything that* might "bring the party into disrepute". Offenders will risk a public reprimand, and their behaviour will be reported to their constituency chairmen. If Mr Blair succeeds in gagging his mavericks, then he really will have changed his party.

DIANE BLOOD, the widow who is fighting to have her dead husband's baby, accused the Human *Fertilisation and Embryology* Authority of "mental torture" after it refused to lift its ban on the use of his frozen sperm.

The High Court had earlier upheld the authority's argument that insemination would be unlawful under the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act because her husband, Stephen, who was in a coma when the sperm was taken, did not give written consent. The authority reviewed her case, in response to the public outcry, but members decided not to exercise their discretion to allow her to take the sperm abroad for insemination.

Lawyers at the Department of Health argue that doctors acted unlawfully when, at Mrs Blood's request, they took sperm from her husband without his consent. He died from meningitis soon after. Mrs Blood, aged 30, is now taking her case to the Court of Appeal, saying that she and her husband had been trying for a baby for some months before he died.

False crusade, page 12

EDUCATION struggled through another bad week. *An international* study showed English 13-year-olds to be low down the league table of ability in maths — significantly lower than Pacific rim countries and east European countries such as Bulgaria, Russia and Hungary. In western Europe, England was on a par with Denmark and Germany, but lower than Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland.

In science, however, England was the equal of, or better than, the rest of western Europe, and behind only four of the 40 countries surveyed — Japan, Korea, Singapore and the Czech Republic.

This year's national tests on 11-year-olds, while better than last year's, showed that only 54 per cent passed in maths, and 58 per cent in English. Reaction was predictable: teachers said that more money needed to be spent; ministers called for a return to old-fashioned teaching methods.

Meanwhile college and university students are financially better off than they were in the 1980s — but at the cost of doing term-time jobs *and taking out bigger loans*, according to a report by the Policy Studies Institute. Although the study found no direct evidence of students dropping out because of financial problems, it did raise questions about the effect on studies of working an average of 10 hours a week.

CRASH, a controversial film about sado-masochists being aroused by car accidents, was banned from the cinemas of London's West End by a group of Westminster councillors who found it "sexually degrading" and "near necrophilia".

The chairman of Westminster's three-man licensing sub-committee, a 70-year-old called John Bull, bemoaned the passing of films "like the Wizard of Oz" and demanded cuts before the film is released. The British Board of Film Classification has yet to pass judgment on it.

Crash, based on a novel by J G Ballard, won the special jury prize at this year's Cannes film festival and has already been shown in Canada, France, Italy, Germany, Portugal and Scandinavia.

Michael Winner, one of many film-makers who signed a letter in support of the work, said: "Come elections, politicians get more censorious in the battle to be holier than the next man. We are really the most over-censored country in the free world."

Safety alarm as fire closes tunnel link

Guardian Reporters

A FULL-SCALE Anglo-French inquiry is under way after a fire broke out on a freight train in the Channel tunnel last week.

The inquiry will focus on the decision to halt the train, leaving lorry drivers and their passengers trapped in a fume-filled carriage for 20 minutes. *Five people were injured*, one seriously.

The fire broke out in a lorry in a carriage towards the front of the train, which was travelling from France, and quickly spread to four other carriages.

The fire, feared by emergency planners since designs for the tunnel were drawn up, is the second to cause an evacuation. The first occurred in December 1994, when two firemen needed hospital treatment. It is the most serious accident in the tunnel since it opened in 1994.

Eurotunnel's president, Patrick Ponsolle, described the fire as an "unpleasant incident", but said it should be seen as a satisfactory test of existing security systems.

Urgent questions are being asked about: the controversial semi-open design of the shuttle train, which allowed the fire to spread from one lorry through five wagons and fill the tunnel with toxic fumes; why it took the French authorities one hour to alert the British fire brigade; why ventilation systems failed to disperse smoke; whether smoke detectors failed to pick up the fact that the lorry, carrying polystyrene, *was already smouldering* when it entered the tunnel at Calais.

The fire took some 14 hours to extinguish, after half the train and a section of the tunnel had been seriously damaged.

Harry Beckingham, head of the fire division at the British Safety Council, accused the debt-ridden operator of "cost-cutting" with safety standards. "The problem is that it is under pressure to make *money for its shareholders, when it* should be spending money on a higher standard of rolling stock."

Later it emerged that the extent of the damage was far greater than first feared. Eurotunnel admitted it was forced to fall back on its third, last-ditch option for coping with fires, as the Consumers' Association in Britain repeated its call for the suspension of the company's licence to run tourist shuttle trains through the tunnel.

Colin Brown, the CA's deputy director of research, said: "The more we hear . . . the more we realise that safety systems failed. All these failures must cast serious doubts on the assurances given about the safety of passenger shuttles. We repeat our demands for suspension of the licence of the tourist shuttle trains."

But at the weekend Eurotunnel confirmed plans to take delivery of 72 freight wagons similar to those involved in the fire, despite widespread fears about the safety of their semi-open design.

With the tunnel unlikely to open to passenger traffic for several weeks because of the damage to 600 metres of track, equipment and *tunnelling, Eurotunnel* said delivery of the new wagons, commissioned from a French company this year, would still go ahead in March 1998.

The lattice-sided wagons on Le Shuttle have always been contentious. In 1991, the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority was so concerned about the design that it told Eurotunnel it must phase them out by March 1994. But under commercial pressure from Eurotunnel, the decision was reversed in July 1994.

Ferry companies have increased daily crossings from Dover to Calais by 50 per cent to cope with the extra passengers.



French firefighters evacuate an injured traveller from the tunnel

Youth crime system 'fails'

Alan Travis

MORE than £1 billion a year is being spent on an inefficient juvenile justice system which is less effective than a decade ago, according to an Audit Commission report published last week.

That damning indictment, in the report, *Misspent Youth*, says fewer teenagers were actually convicted in the courts than in the mid-1980s.

Its documentation of the failure of the way the criminal justice system deals with 150,000 teenage offenders each year is expected to have a significant impact on the political debate on youth crime.

It also warns that urgent action is needed to avert a demographic "crime bomb" as the population begins to bulge in the 18 to 20-year-old age group — now the peak age of offending for young men.

Commission controller Andrew Foster said: "The whole youth courts process needs a systematic overhaul . . . to break the cycle of antisocial behaviour that has become the day-to-day reality for so many young people."

The report is particularly critical of youth courts, which deal with two out of five juvenile criminals in England and Wales. It found it can take 70 to 170 days for an offender to be arrested and sentenced by one of these courts, with an average of four appearances needed.

The study found that half of those prosecuted in youth courts are discharged or have their cases dismissed or discontinued.

The report says that if about 20 per cent of juveniles — those accused of less serious offences — were sent to programmes such as Northamptonshire's "Caution plus" *rather than to courts, then* about £40 million a year would be released for schemes that addressed their criminal behaviour.

● New legislation forcing children as young as 10 to wear electronic tags to ensure they stay in school was greeted with a barrage of criticism last week.

Under the legislation, the trials of US-style electronic tags to monitor curfew orders for adults will be extended to offenders aged 10 to 15.

The use of the tags to monitor attendance at school — an extension of the proposals not previously revealed — will not need the agreement of teachers. They are also intended to be used to keep young offenders away from potential trouble spots such as shopping centres and football matches. The schemes are run by private security companies.

Seven per cent abortions rise after pill scare 'fiasco'

Chris Mihill

FEARS that the contraceptive pill scare of October last year would lead *to a rise in abortions* were supported last week with official statistics showing a 7 per cent rise in terminations for the first three months of this year.

Family planning groups predicted an increase in abortions and unwanted babies after the Government's warning that newer "third generation" pills carried a small but increased risk of causing blood clots.

The Office for National Statistics said abortions in the first quarter in *England and Wales* were 2,688 higher that the same period in 1995.

Since a peak in 1990, the trend in the number of abortions has generally been downwards. The figures for the first three months of this year were the highest for the quarter since 1991.

There have also been predictions of an increase in births resulting from the scare. A number of obstetric units have produced informal figures suggesting such a trend, with *some* reporting a 25 per cent increase in births. Official figures are not yet available.

The Birth Control Trust has produced a report looking at the international reaction to the announcement, pointing out that only Germany and Norway backed the British view that women should be advised to change brands.

Ann Furedi, director of the trust, said: "Our research shows this was a needless panic. Other countries, having assessed the same data, concluded that there was no need for immediate action.

"The action of the Committee on Safety of Medicines resulted in the *misery of unwanted pregnancy for* many women in the UK and undermined the attempts of medical authorities in other countries to present a more objective assessment of the risks and benefits of the pill. We are not arguing that information should be held back from women — simply that it should be presented in an accurate, balanced way."

Chris Smith, Labour's health spokesman, said the Department of Health bungled last October's *announcement. "The Government* must accept that the rise in abortions earlier this year is the result of its own incompetence."

Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat health spokesman, who has tabled 250 parliamentary question on the pill scare, said an inquiry should be set up into the drugs safety regulatory process. "This was a public health fiasco from the Government. No clear answers have been given to the allegations that *Government actions were scientifi*cally and medically unnecessary. It is clear that many women, especially young women, stopped taking the pill as a result of the scare."

● Nearly one in 13 smears to check for cervical cancer are too badly taken to be read by laboratories.

A study in the British Medical Journal says that of the 4.5 million smears examined in England in 1994, more than 350,000 were inadequate. Repeating the tests cost the NHS some £4 million.

Raiders 'killed for guns'

Luke Harding

AN 84-YEAR-OLD man who lived alone was beaten and strangled by burglars for his collection of guns, police said last week.

Kenneth Speakman, a retired *town clerk*, was attacked near his home in Ramsgate, Kent, and forced to open the locked cabinets where the guns were stored. The gang made off with 12 handguns, including a .33 Smith and Wesson, as well as a number of antique weapons.

Detective Superintendent Nick Biddis, who is leading the inquiry, described the murder as "dreadful" and said the killers had been motivated by their victim's gun collection.

"It appears Mr Speakman was *beaten near* his front door and taken into various rooms in the house which were searched. Mr Speakman kept his guns locked in secure cabinets in accordance with firearms regulations. These cabinets had been opened and it appears 12 guns and some ammunition has been taken."

Mr Speakman was well-known in the area as a firearms enthusiast. He had held a firearms certificate for more than 50 years.

Detectives fear the guns may have ended up in the hands of an organised criminal gang. Most of the weapons were of a calibre which MPs have voted to ban.

Anti-gun campaigners said the fact that Mr Speakman was murdered for his weapons strengthened the case for a complete ban on handguns in homes.

Labour's home affairs spokesman, Doug Henderson, said the case "should remind everyone in Parliament of the need to bring about a speedy change in the law to ban the holding of hand guns at home".

BMA backs fluoride despite payout

Stuart Millar

THE row over the safety of fluoride escalated this week *when* the British Medical Association insisted that a £1,000 payment by a toothpaste manufacturer to a child whose teeth appear to have been damaged by the chemical did not constitute evidence that it is harmful.

Sharon and Trevor Isaacs, of Highams Park, Essex, received the "goodwill" payment from Colgate-Palmolive after their son Kevin, aged 10, was diagnosed *as suffering* from dental fluorosis, where the enamel is mottled by fluoride.

The company denies liability, but campaigners have claimed the case adds to growing evidence that fluoride is harmful.

There is mounting opposition to the practice of adding fluoride to water supplies, but the BMA insisted it would continue its campaign to have the Government make water companies add fluoride to their supplies to cut tooth decay among children.

It is one of 20 health organisations calling for action against water companies which refuse to extend fluoridation through fear of legal action by campaigners who say it can damage health.

Noel Olsen, of the BMA council, said: "There is an abundance of evidence that there is not a problem with fluoride. It occurs naturally, and children drinking it in their water will generally have much healthier teeth than those who don't."

The Water Services Association, an umbrella organisation for the water industry, said: "Water companies are entitled to be concerned that fluoridation . . . is by no means universally supported among health experts or dental or medical professionals."

In Brief

A TOTAL of 1.76 million homes, more than twice the number of households in East Anglia, will have to be built in the English countryside in the next 20 years for the 4.4 million households expected to be formed over the next 20 years, John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, announced.

BABCOCK International secured £500 million of work for the Rosyth naval dockyard in Scotland under a deal to buy control of the yard from the Ministry of Defence The deal is thought to be worth £25 million.

CHRISTOPHER GAN, aged 15, the schoolboy who triggered a classroom dispute that led to the killing of the headmaster Philip Lawrence, was sentenced to three years for conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm and wounding a pupil.

THE OIL companies Texaco and Gulf were each fined £100,000 as a result of the explosion and fires at the Pembroke refinery in west Wales two years ago.

THE Arts Council announced a scheme to give away £20 million of National Lottery money to new creative arts projects, some of which could be spent on paying actors' wages. The money will be available for people as well as buildings, for the first time since the lottery was started two years ago.

CRAIG ALLEE, a 21-year-old man with spina bifida was rescued by police with stun grenades after being snatched from his home in Liverpool and held in a hotel in north London.

POWER failure on the London Underground brought chaos for thousands of passengers after a double failure of the power supply and the back-up system lasted several hours.

ROISIN McALISKEY, the daughter of former Nationalist MP Bernadette McAliskey, faces extradition to Germany on terrorist charges, including attempted murder in connection with an IRA attack on a British army base earlier this year.

A DECISION by British censors to ban a video, Visions of Ecstacy, after legal advice that it could be blasphemous, was upheld by the European Court of Human Rights.

THE Labour leadership has proposed limits on the sums political parties can spend. The party also declared that it has received £6 million from business to help campaigning in the run-up to the general election.

THE fashion photographer, Terence Donovan, killed himself at the weekend. He was 60.

Clarke wins breathing space

Michael White

JOHN MAJOR dramatically caved in to Tory rebels this week to avoid the row over a single European currency overshadowing the Budget.

After days of insisting that it would stand firm, the Government offered a series of concessions to the rebels, including a Commons statement on a single European currency by Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown, immediately seized on the Treasury statement, saying: "The Government's position seems to be changing from hour to hour. It is clear there is chaos and confusion at the heart of a government which is a direct result of weak leadership."

Mr Major, faced with the worst internal party crisis over Europe since the Maastricht treaty debates, ordered ministers last week to seek ways to placate the rebels.

On Monday the Chancellor won a vital breathing space in his party's running war over Europe. But Mr Clarke's conciliatory Commons statement only served to intensify Eurosceptic pressure on both sides to prevent sterling being sucked into the orbit of the proposed European single currency.

The 80-minute Commons cross-examination of the Chancellor served to ease tensions in the Tory ranks, which had threatened to unsettle the last pre-election Budget and even to precipitate a no-confidence challenge to the Government's survival.

The feuding Tory factions behaved as though they had looked into the election abyss and drawn back from a public quarrel. But Mr Clarke's insistence that the Cabinet was right to keep open its options on joining the single currency — "there could be advantages in such a move" — drew ironic cheers from Labour and a hostile growl from Tory Eurosceptics.

In the run-up to the European Union's Dublin summit on December 13, their suspicion remains high that, under the proposed "stability pact", Whitehall may be drawn into a system of swingeing EU fines for running persistent budget deficits — even if a future British government decides to stay out of the proposed euro bloc.

Despite Mr Clarke's emphatic, even scornful, rejection of the past week's claims that he had been poised to sign away British options at next week's meeting of EU finance ministers (Ecofin) in Brussels, the sceptics are only half-reconciled by assurances extracted during what John Redwood later described as "a good day's work".

During his Commons grilling Mr Clarke dismissed suggestions that he had been saying one thing in public, another in private. He also complained about leaks that had exposed his negotiating position, and implicitly accused the EU Commissioner, Neil Kinnock, of being the source of a paper provided for Mr Kinnock and his fellow commissioner, Sir Leon Brittan, leaked by Labour to the Sunday newspapers.

Throughout the exchange Mr Clarke, the Cabinet's most outspoken pro-European, assured MPs that he was keen to subject the complex single currency negotiations to the scrutiny and approval of what he called "the parliament of our independent nation state".

Significantly, he offered various reassurances, in addition to last week's promise to place a block, known as a "scrutiny reserve", on any political agreement at Ecofin which could then be passed on to the Dublin heads of government summit.

To the satisfaction of many critics Mr Clarke insisted that claims that majority voting, rather than unanimity, could be used by the euro "ins" to impose fines on the "outs" were incorrect. He promised to seek written assurances, that would prevent the European Court of Justice from eroding British opt-outs. He also confirmed his willingness to engage in a one- or two-day full Commons debate before the Dublin summit.

Behind the scenes the Prime Minister had also worked to re-build bridges with backbenchers, taking the Clarke line when he met Sir Marcus Fox, chairman of the 1922 committee, and senior colleagues.

Italy rejoins ERM, page 23



Snow in the Pentland hills near Edinburgh after blizzards cut power supplies, closed schools and blocked roads across the north of Britain last week. In Wales, high winds brought down electricity lines and left 8,000 homes without electricity
PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MacLEOD

Jargoning them into submission

SKETCH
Simon Hoggart

"I'LL be like Bradman playing cricket on the village green," said one Tory left-winger. He was predicting Ken Clarke's appearance at the despatch box, when the Chancellor was called to face the angry Eurosceptics. It wasn't like that: Mr Clarke was more like Geoffrey Boycott, offering us interminable boredom interrupted by outbursts of irrational violence.

Up in the distinguished visitors' gallery sat Sir James Goldsmith, looking like Ernst Stavro Blofeld, a little puzzled that Michael Caine seemed to have landed the part of Bond. Next to Sir James was a dark, sinister figure, who turned out to be Patrick Robertson, the famous Eurosceptic.

One expected Sir James to lean over the gallery, stroke his platinum cat, and murmur: "I myself abhor violence in all its forms, Mr Clarke, but my associate Mr Robertson is less fastidious . . ."

As it was, the Dear Leader and President for Life of the Referendum Party favoured two expressions: a smile which played on his lips like a crocodile after a good lunch, and a sort of exaggerated cynical mirth. He alternated between these while watching the Chancellor speak.

Mr Clarke blamed the press, notably the Sunday Times, which had misrepresented documents leaked from Brussels. Who had done the leaking? Commissioner Neil Kinnock was his guess, and he would not be sending any more confidential policy papers to that office again — and apart from the birth of his grandchild, that was possibly the best news Mr Kinnock has had all year.

It is the nature of the big parliamentary rows that they take place in reverse. MPs begin at a fever pitch of rage and then calm down. So it was. And you can be pretty sure that the actual debate will be as exciting as a milky drink at bedtime.

For the time being, Mr Clarke jargoned them into submission. He gave them the Euro-zone, the Non-Euro Area Member State and the Stability Pact. He threatened them with the ERM Mark II. He waved the Ecofin EMU in their faces. When they thought they might have got him backing into the ropes, he rallied to hit them with "a debate on a forthwith motion".

At times he was unnervingly frank. He wouldn't want to pay any of the proposed new fines. "We don't want any BSE financial obligations falling on a country already trying to cope with an excessive deficit," he said. He left the sceptic Bill Cash spluttering with the simple line: "My memory's going, I've forgotten your point."

Labour decided it was time to weigh in as well. Peter Shore asked whether he wanted to see a future British government hamstrung like a rate-capped council. Tony Benn warned that single currencies did not necessarily mean political unity. The dinar hadn't held Yugoslavia together, nor had the dollar prevented the American civil war. (Nor, you might add, does Monopoly money stop people from occasionally upending the board.)

New row over Willetts affair

David Hencke

TONY Newton, the Leader of the House, is expected to set up an inquiry into the Guardian's disclosure of the row on the cash-for-questions inquiry over whether ministers and other MPs should be required to give evidence on oath.

The leak followed five hours of secret deliberations by the standards and privileges committee over evidence given by David Willetts, the Paymaster General, who is accused of trying to influence an earlier inquiry in 1994 into former minister Neil Hamilton.

Secret advice was given by Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney General, to the committee on punitive sanctions that could follow if MPs giving evidence were found to have lied.

The leak was raised in the House by Sir Terence Higgins, chairman of the Commons liaison committee. He asked the Speaker, Betty Boothroyd, to intervene. Ms Boothroyd called on Mr Newton, the Cabinet minister who chairs the committee, to take the necessary action.

The present cash-for-questions inquiry was set up after a libel action brought against the Guardian by ex-Department of Trade and Industry minister Mr Hamilton and by Ian Greer, a parliamentary lobbyist, collapsed.

The current hearings of the committee are involved in deciding whether Mr Willetts, then a government whip, broke Commons rules by trying to influence a 1994 parliamentary inquiry into the Hamilton affair.

Some MPs on the committee are arguing that it is essential witnesses give evidence on oath if the inquiry is seen to be fair and impartial. Sanctions could be imposed if witnesses were found to have lied — including expulsion from Parliament or even prison for perjury. But Sir Nicholas is said to have given confusing advice which has delayed the proceedings.

MPs on the committee are still to decide whether to call former whip, Andrew Mitchell, to give evidence after the leaking of a memo written by him suggesting he was trying to get privileged information about Mr Hamilton's consultancies during the 1994 inquiry.

Humans 'still used in radiation tests'

Owen Bowcott

EXPERIMENTS in which human volunteers are injected with radioactive isotopes are still being undertaken for medical research, a former government scientist said this week.

Arthur Morgan, who worked for nearly 40 years at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell, revealed he had taken part in 30 such tests without pay.

He was injected with barium 133 and plutonium 237 and inhaled cigarette smoke seeded with traces of radioactive iodine. Now aged 68, he insisted he had never suffered any noticeable ill-effects.

Responding to claims by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament that the Government had secretly conducted experiments on humans, Dr Morgan, a radio-biologist, maintained the research had always been made public.

CND's report, The Nuclear Guinea Pigs, prompted Matthew Taylor, the Liberal Democrat spokesman on the environment, to call on the Government for an explanation for the 40-year programme of experimentation which involved up to 200 people.

One briefing paper reproduced by CND included a comment in 1989 by Bart Gledhill, at the Lawrence Livermore nuclear weapons research laboratory in the United States. He observed that exposure levels were relatively small, but none the less "could produce a future cancer".

Mr Taylor said: "There are big question marks the British have to answer about why they were prepared to carry on experiments on human beings when the US did not do so."

A letter to Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, had never been answered, he added. "It is high time ministers explained what risks those volunteers were exposed to, for what purposes, and whether adequate warnings were given to them."

In a statement the MoD confirmed that experiments had taken place at Harwell, at the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston and at the chemical and biological research station at Porton Down since the 1950s.

A spokeswoman said: "There is no evidence of any MoD involvement in unethical radiation experiments on humans. All studies involved volunteers. They have been subject to proper medical safeguards and with the full knowledge of the persons concerned."

Dr Morgan, who retired in 1993, said: "There are still radioactive medical experiments going on at Harwell. They are approved by an ethics committee which includes members of the Nuclear Radiation Protection Board."

Residual traces of the barium 133 injected into Mr Harwell 10 years ago were still present. The experiment helped calculate the dosage inadvertently assimilated by workers using radium in luminous paint during the war.

The plutonium 237 had been injected to assess doses absorbed by workers in the nuclear industry. On both occasions urine and blood samples had provided information about how the body processed and disposed of radioactive material.

"In all those cases I gave my informed consent," he said.

CND's chair, Janet Bloomfield, said: "The Government has consistently misled Parliament, the public and those involved, about what has been done."

Scientists find hint of mass

Tim Radford

SCIENTISTS using an ultraviolet telescope orbiting through space suspect they may be on the track of the missing 90 per cent of the universe.

They have detected radiation from a vast, thick cloud of gas in a cluster of galaxies 300 million light years away. The mass of the gas is, they calculate, that of 10 million million suns.

This gas alone, they believe, could help resolve a long-standing problem of galactic clusters: that they do not seem to be massive enough to behave the way they do. Up to 90 per cent of their mass is "missing".

Missing mass, or dark matter, has kept astronomers happy for years. The behaviour of the 100 billion galaxies in the visible universe, each containing 100 billion stars, can only be explained if the galaxies are up to 100 times heavier than the stars that shine in them.

Scientists have proposed theoretical space monsters like cosmic string, or undetectable particles called wimps, to explain the discrepancy. Others have favoured a universe riddled with black holes or "brown dwarves", stars too small to catch fire.

But Stuart Bowyer of the University of California and Richard Lieu of the University of Alabama reported in the US journal Science that they used the Extreme Ultraviolet Explorer satellite's telescope to detect awesome levels of "cool" gas in the Coma cluster. Cool is a relative term: its temperature is between 800,000 and 2 million Celsius. The cloud stretches across 2.6 million light years.

The discovery raises big questions. Why is the gas there? Why doesn't it heat up or cool down? "It's right but unexplainable," said Professor Bowyer. "It's up to the theorists to explain where this gas comes from."

The gas provides some of the mass to account for the gravitational glue that binds a cluster.

There may be a lot more gas. The researchers are about to turn the telescope on other clusters to see. "Perhaps the missing mass is there in the form of ordinary matter, and we haven't looked hard enough," said Professor Lieu.

Human rights have a place in history

HERBAL tea and acupuncture can help cure hoarseness, China's President Jiang Zemin helpfully told a smiling and confident Bill Clinton when they met in Manila last weekend and announced reciprocal state visits over the next two years. But when the first American president to go to China since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989 arrives in Beijing he should urge stronger and more conventional medicine on his hosts.

Warm words between the two leaders at the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) forum contrasted sharply with the calculated *froideur* at the same event in Seattle in 1993, though again there were no signs of agreement on the range of contentious issues that separate them.

Trade certainly matters to the Americans: more of it could help reduce the $35 billion deficit the US has with China. It could also help allay security fears that an antagonistic China poses in Asia, particularly in its sale of nuclear technology to such countries as Pakistan and Iran, and its role in the disputes between North and South Korea. It is, after all, only a few months since US naval battle groups were dispatched to the Taiwan Strait after Beijing "tested" some missiles to coincide with the Republic's election.

For their part, China's leaders, nervously awaiting the post-Deng Xiaoping era, know that to maintain their Leninist-led capitalist revolution and enrich their people they need massive foreign investment that will only come if relations with Washington are stable.

Mr Clinton's announcement is a significant undertaking, particularly after a re-election campaign in which foreign policy rarely featured and in the light of his earlier but now muted public criticism of China's refusal to address human rights abuses. The current line from Washington is that though there are "serious problems" in the relationship with Beijing, high-level meetings can help move it along.

The US is far from alone in being able to live with China's tyranny as long as it embraces the market. But its enormous political and economic weight means that it sets both the tone and the pace for other countries. Unless Mr Clinton actively seeks progress on continuing repression in Tibet and the petty but vicious oppression of dissidents at home he will send the wrong message to Beijing. His officials have already made clear that no visits will go ahead until Washington has assessed how the Chinese are dealing with their obligations to maintain the status quo in post-1997 Hong Kong. Judiciously formulated, other conditions could be attached too. Concern is mounting that in the world's "rush to engagement" with the state that contains a quarter of mankind, human rights are being left behind. If Mr Clinton is to succeed in what Americans like to call a "reach for history" in his second term, then his policy towards China needs to consist of substantially more than a trade promotion programme.

Tory missiles miss their target

GENERALS always plan the next war on the basis of the previous one. Politicians take a similar approach to elections. That is why the two main British parties believe that next year's general election will turn on tax and spending, just as the 1992 contest is generally deemed to have done. For years now, Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, has been hammering and welding Labour into an ironclad unsinkable dreadnought on spending at the same time as probing away with increasing success at the Conservatives' claims to be trustworthy on tax. Listening to the him over those long months, only the proverbial fool in a hurry could seriously imagine that Labour is in taxing and spending mode this time.

Yet this is the case that the Conservatives are committed to establishing, and, since this is the age of the permanent election campaign, they are not waiting until the election is called before trying to make their point. But it is an uphill task. Mr Brown's commitment to sound finances and his rigorous insistence that fresh programmes must come from within existing resources are almost beyond serious question. He repeated these dogmas last week for the umpteenth time, imperiously emphasising that the only definition of a Labour commitment is one that can be found in the Road To The Manifesto document. Everything else, he said, including the speeches of shadow ministers and even Tony Blair's suggestion that this or that idea was under consideration, was ruled out by the Shadow Chancellor. This approach has delighted many surprising converts in British industry and commerce and, by the same token, is the despair of some of the party's traditional supporters. But it could hardly be clearer.

Nothing is more important for the Conservative party than to breach a hole in Mr Brown's meticulously engineered defences. That is why the Tories launched a serious pre-dawn bombardment against them last week, releasing a document claiming to expose 89 different Labour spending commitments costing an alleged £30 billion, the equivalent to £1,200 in extra taxes for the average family every year. It did not, however, work as the strategists had hoped. The way in which the document was released, amid claims that it was authorised by Sir Robin Butler — Cabinet Secretary and head of the Civil Service — rightly caused an indignant reaction in Whitehall. And close examination of the Conservative allegations does not bear many of them out, as Labour's enthusiastic counter-bombardment went some way to show. The Tories have not shot their bolt, but they certainly spoiled their own case by exaggeration and by unrepentant over-confidence. In the end, the Conservatives may have loosened a few rivets in the ironclad, but Labour strategists are right that the Tories have used too much of their best ammunition too early.

The Tories have always believed that they can do lots of damage to Labour on tax and spend policy. Some strategists see it as their number one election winning issue, much as it was in 1992. That is why they tried so hard. A week before the Budget, they planned to create a momentum which will enable Kenneth Clarke to put the party on the comeback trail in the polls. But the Tories do not enjoy the luxury of the nip-and-tuck party battle of 1991-92. They are so far adrift from Labour today that they need to start their electoral recovery much earlier in the cycle than they did last time. What happened last week was an act of calculated desperation. It didn't work. And it didn't work because, though Labour's defences are not absolutely watertight on all the charges, the allegations are essentially untrue.

Buggins's turn at the UN

SO, IT IS farewell Boutros Boutros-Ghali, but the identity of the next secretary-general of the United Nations, and the prospects for the world body as it enters the 21st century, are very unclear. Until last week's formal US veto of a second term for the Egyptian diplomat, no one was quite certain that Bill Clinton would stick to the threat he made while campaigning last summer. Now that the doubts have been dispelled, the bargaining will begin. The problem is that it will be conducted mostly in secret and in a hair-raisingly brief period of time, between now and December 31. Governments talk mysteriously of candidates "emerging" and "soundings" being taken, as if the selection process was truly akin to choosing a pope. There has already been unedifying sniping between the United States and France, and much more can be expected.

Britain, interestingly, did the decent thing in not backing the US. But UN-watchers predict that the next secretary-general will, in any case, be another African, following the custom of Buggins's turn that ensures each region of the world gets two terms in the top job. Mr Boutros-Ghali's rudely truncated tenure means that it will be politically impossible to elect a non-African, thus automatically excluding possible worthies, such as Ireland's Mary Robinson or Norway's Gro Harlem Brundtland.

The irony is that if Mr Boutros-Ghali had survived, or even accepted a compromise one-year extension, this unjustifed practice might have died a natural death. Better procedures are certainly possible: Sir David Hannay, one of the smoothest of Britain's men on the East River, has proposed a single seven-year term, a deputy secretary-general for management and administration, and a mandatory — and public — election manifesto for candidates. As it is sensible, reforms of this kind may now be delayed for another five years.

False crusade for new life after death

A widow who wants to have her dead husband's baby is fighting for rights that are wrong, says **Martin Kettle**

DIANE BLOOD'S fight to use her dead husband's sperm stirs sympathy among all who witness it. Thousands of people apparently support her tenacious campaign. The Labour peer Lord Winston is trying to change the law on her behalf. She embodies those indomitable qualities which the British admire and which, in other circumstances, one might describe as spunky.

Watching her anguished face as she puts her case, and listening to the intensity with which Mrs Blood pursues it, no one could fail to be impressed. It is doubly shocking that a woman should lose her husband and then be faced with such an unremitting intimate ordeal, least of all in public. It is outrageous.

Mrs Blood invites us to take a position on her case and most people seem happy to enlist in her support. So I take a different view with some trepidation, because hers is a situation one would not wish upon anybody. But it is she who has put her predicament in the public arena and those of us who are uneasy about what she is doing are entitled to say so.

I think Mrs Blood is in the wrong. I am pleased that she lost her case again last week. I think the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) was right to stand its ground and to uphold both the letter and the spirit of the law. I hope that Mrs Blood continues to lose. I think she deserves unswerving support in her tragic ordeal. But that does not mean that she ought to get her way — least of all because people feel sorry for her.

It isn't good enough to say that because Mrs Blood's situation touched our hearts, the law should be ignored to accommodate her, or even that it should be changed to stop another case like this. This is partly because the law is the law. But it is also because the law that she challenges is a good one and too important to tamper with, let alone in such circumstances.

The dead cannot clarify their intentions. That is why, for example, in the parallel context of property, wills are so important and probate law so meticulous. Mr Blood's sperm is no different. He did not leave the written consent that the law requires, so his intentions are therefore not proved.

This is not some detail that can be set aside merely to gratify his widow. It goes to the heart of the matter. Don't let's kid ourselves. Without such rigid rules, there would be conceptual chaos. The HFEA is right and responsible to refuse Mrs Blood. It is more important to hold the line on that point of principle than it is to give her what she wants. If she cannot prove her case, she should not win. She is not a pioneer but the thin end of the wedge.

But Mrs Blood also seems to me to be wrong for more controversial reasons. All the coverage of the case assumes that it is right and natural for Mrs Blood to conceive a child with a dead father whom she loved and married. But is that so? I don't agree with that either.

Call me Mr Conventional, but I find the whole thing decidedly creepy. It is pretty difficult to accept the way in which the sperm was obtained from the comatose Mr Blood in the first place. Would there be the same tearful popular enthusiasm for a live and healthy husband to impregnate his vegetative wife, I wonder? I doubt it. But, even if we allow the means, I find it hard to see anything natural in any circumstances about conception with a dead person.

IT CANNOT be right for a child to have a dead father who did not even know he was involved in the conception. After all, where do you draw the line? If Mrs Blood gets her way once then what, other than shortage of supply, is to stop her doing it again? The implication of Mrs Blood's case is that she will feel just as entitled to impregnate herself a second, third or fourth time with her husband's deep-frozen sperm. I hope I am not alone in finding this morbid, undesirable and a poor precedent, with or without his consent.

The problem at the centre of the Blood case is that too many people, Mrs Blood included, seem to start from the presumption that a woman has an inalienable right to conceive, which is always superior to any other consideration. If a woman wants a baby, they say, and there is a natural impediment to conception — be it infertility or the absence for some reason of an appropriate donor — then it will always be right for that impediment to be removed.

That cannot be right. Mr Blood is 18 months dead. Mrs Blood may still be fertile when 18 months have become 18 years. It cannot be morally right or socially desirable to allow her access to her husband's sperm after 18 years — and if it is not right then it is not right now either.

In my opinion the Sheffield hospital should never have obtained Mr Blood's sperm and should destroy it now. It is in no one's interest to drag out this saga any further. Mrs Blood and her supporters may see hers as a great and beautiful cause. I think it is misguided, undesirable, morbid and verges on moral blackmail. It should never have been allowed in the first place.



Diane Blood: going against the letter and the spirit of the law



Grim reminder . . . Rwandan refugees on their way home pass a cemetery in Nyanza, Kigali containing 800 victims of the 1994 massacres of Tutsis

Paris must come clean on Rwanda arms

EDITORIAL

THE international community's attitude to the Rwandan crisis is becoming more difficult to determine. The need to send a multinational force to the Great Lakes region in Africa is openly questioned by several Western countries, including the United States, which was unwilling from the start even though Canada had volunteered to take command of the operation.

On top of the uncertainty triggered by the return of hundreds of thousands of refugees to Rwanda, a new element has emerged which further complicates the situation and throws a great deal of suspicion on the credibility and neutrality of the whole undertaking.

Allegations have been made recently, both in London and Paris, that French and British companies shipped stocks of weapons in the spring and early summer of 1994 to the Hutu militias, the very same groups whose responsibility for the massacres of Tutsis has been established beyond doubt.

According to documents recently discovered in the Kivu refugee camps and shown on British television, arms merchants have continued to supply the fanatical followers of the men behind the genocide in violation of the United Nations arms embargo imposed on Rwanda in June 1994.

Several French firms also appear to have gone on fulfilling — for the benefit of the former Rwandan army — contracts concluded with the Kigali government as part of the co-operation agreements signed in 1976.

If these allegations prove to be correct, the new Rwandan regime could turn them to good advantage. Ever since it took power just over two years ago, it has been pointing out that France, anxious to preserve its influence in the region, committed a grave error in enthusiastically supporting the former Hutu army for too long.

The Kigali government accuses France of using the military-humanitarian Operation Turquoise as a cover for helping the sinister Hutu militias to escape. It is these same suspicions that Rwanda now raises when it challenges France's right to play a central role in the operations to help refugees that are [illegible]

The revelations have brought a prompt reaction from the British government, which announced on November 19 that it was setting up an inquiry to look into the allegations. London wants to find out the whole truth about the matter in less than one month.

The administration in Paris, on the other hand, has adopted a lower profile, issuing an embarrassed denial and questioning the authenticity of the documents discovered. The French government has also declared that the last shipment of French weapons was delivered in early 1994.

However, no one can be satisfied with this brief denial. France, too, should call for an inquiry to allay once and for all the deep suspicions that are hanging over it. This is the price that it has to pay if it wants to be able to claim to intervene as a neutral party in the Great Lakes region.

(November 21)

Algeria referendum sparks more violence

Catherine Simon

AMID the calls for a boycott that followed the Algerian government's decision to push ahead with a referendum on November 28 on the country's constitution, a row has broken out over an Amnesty International report that delivers a stinging indictment of the Islamist extremist groups and the government.

Disappearances, murders, cases of torture and kidnappings committed in the name of the "anti-terrorist" struggle or in the name of the "holy war" are increasing, according to the Amnesty report, which is published this week.

The government and Islamic militants are equally involved in slaying innocent people, the reports says, while the international community has so far remained indifferent to the Algerian people's suffering.

Pierre Sané, chairman of Amnesty, answering accusations of partiality frequently levelled against the organisation, says there was no question of giving in to pressure from the government and its henchmen. [illegible] coming from the authorities, some Algerian media and political parties", but they have "never succeeded in proving our information was untrue".

"The authorities would be doing something more useful for human rights if they conducted thorough and independent inquiries instead of censoring and managing the news and attacking those who defend these rights," he says.

This, however, is a concern that does not seem to be shared in Algeria, where the coming referendum has touched off heated debate and a new round of violence.

Mouloud Hocine, a former prime minister and member of the FLN (Algerian National Liberation Front), told the Algiers daily Le Matin that he considered the referendum "dangerous for the country", while Hocine Aït Ahmed's Socialist Forces' Front (FFS) and Saïd Saidi's Union for Culture and Democracy (RCD) have called for a boycott.

Any election is used as a pretext by both sides to redouble their efforts. Since the start of the crisis five years ago, Amnesty figures show that more than 50,000 people have been killed. Thousands more have been imprisoned for their opinions.

The number of people reported "missing" after being taken in for questioning by the police runs into several thousands, prompting Amnesty to openly condemn what it calls the climate of terror.

The only new development in this devastated country has been the setting up and funding of armed militias by the government. Mr Sané says he deplores the proliferation of these so-called self-defence groups, which see themselves as "patriots" and which are encouraging Algerians "to take justice into their own hands".

He believes that the appearance of the militias, initially meant to protect the community but quickly taking an active part in counter-insurrection operations, armed strikes and summary executions, are only likely to spell more trouble for the country. Amnesty deplored the "total impunity" enjoyed by the members of these squads, which are particularly active in rural areas.

The communities that the militias alleged terrorist attacks frequently become the target of retaliation by Islamist guerrillas.

The rest of the Amnesty report had a depressingly familiar ring to it. Torture has become commonplace on both sides — government forces usually resort to methods involving the use of a "rag", blow torch and electricity to torture prisoners and break down their resistance. Such practices are said to be common in detention centres such as the one on the heights above Algiers, known as Châteauneuf.

But militant Islamist guerrillas are no better. They use brutal methods, such as kidnappings and torture, to cow people into submission.

It is difficult to put a precise figure on these crimes, the Amnesty report says, just as it is impossible to know who is committing them and why: "Security forces operate in civilian dress, travel in unmarked vehicles and don't give names or official rank"; while "Islamist groups sometimes move around in uniform and pass themselves off as members of the security forces".

(November 20)

Thailand's new PM inherits old problems

Jean-Claude Pomonti in Bangkok

WHEN Chavalith Yongchaiyudh resigned as commander-in-chief of Thailand's land forces in 1990, he made no secret of his ambition to become prime minister. By winning 125 seats in the general elections, his New Aspiration Party (NAP), has succeeded in negotiating a coalition with five other parties that will give it a comfortable majority in the House of Representatives with 221 out of 393 seats.

His principal ally is Chatichai Choonhavan, the former prime minister who was toppled by a coup in 1991. His Chart Pattana party won 52 seats.

Chavalith has left nothing to chance. Though his first crack at politics ended in failure when he stepped down as defence minister in 1990 — after six months in office — he soon formed his own political party.

When the army was forced out of politics in the wake of the bloody crackdown of May 1992, Chavalith became interior minister in the government of Democrat Chuan Leekpai, from 1992 to 1995. He was later defence minister in the outgoing administration of Banharn Silpa-archa, who dissolved the government in September.

These influential portfolios enabled him to consolidate the NAP's position in the country, especially in the disadvantaged northeast where he conducted a campaign in the 1980s to win over former communist insurgents. Meanwhile the contacts Chavalith made with Beijing enabled him to obtain the support of the Sino-Thai conglomerates which, in recent years, have been investing billions of dollars in China.

He also has good relations with Hun Sen, seen as the key man in the Cambodian government, and with the Burmese generals. And, finally, he is considered to have the confidence of Laos, where he has good friends.

A product of a system of political patronage, the former general will first have to reassure a gloomy business community. The economy, which had been prospering for the past 10 years, is beginning to slacken off with a fall in export growth and a current payments balance deficit of more than 8 per cent of GNP. After tumbling almost 6 percentage points on November 18, the stock market recovered slightly when it became clear that Banharn Silpa-archa's Chart Thai party would not be invited to join the coalition.

However, the business community would have preferred to see the elections deliver a government headed by the Democrats, who came in second with 123 seats. They are seen as being more representative of modern Thailand and, moreover, took 28 of the 30 seats in Bangkok.

Chavalith will have to strive to give his government a new image despite the fact that many of those who worked under the previous government are among his political staff and that he faces substantial opposition in parliament.

He is already committed to entrusting the ministries responsible for the economy to a group of experts working under Amnuay Viravan, a former banker who was a member of the previous government and who will be one of his five deputy prime ministers.

The real challenge will be to end the crisis of confidence in a parliamentary system apparently incapable of taking a lead at a time when economic growth is sluggish. The ambitious general has given himself two years to succeed, the same time limit set by the preceding parliament for completing constitutional reform.

(November 20)

Judge jails rappers for 'verbal attack'

Nathaniel Herzberg and Erich Inciyan

ON NOVEMBER 14, a Toulon court handed down three-month prison sentences to Kool Shen and Joey Star, two members of the rap group NTM, for insulting remarks they had directed at uniformed police in charge of security at a concert held on July 14, 1995, at La Seyne-sur-Mer, near Toulon. The rappers were also fined 50,000 francs ($10,000) and banned from singing in public for six months.

The "concert of freedoms" had been organised to protest against the victory of the far-right National Front at Toulon's local elections.

The court heard how the two members of NTM — the acronym of Nique Ta Mère (Fuck Your Mother) — had showered the police with abuse, saying: "I fuck the police. I bugger and I piss on the law. The police are fascists. It's they who murder. They usually go about in threes. They're dressed in blue and drive Renault 19s. They're not far behind you at the entrance.

"You know who I'm talking about. These people are dangerous for our freedoms. Our enemies are the men in blue. They wait for things to de[illegible] on them."

The public prosecutor, Pierre Cortes, denounced those remarks as "an incitement to crime". He regretted that Star and Shen had not seen fit to attend the proceedings, and suggested that they might at least have apologised. The rappers's defence counsel, Michel Blum, pointed out that their absence was justified by the need to ensure that their fans did not cause a public disturbance. He stressed that spectators had not shown any hostility towards police officers present at the La Seyne gig or any of the numerous concerts NTM had given all over France.

After Judge Claude Boulanger had handed down his verdict, Blum said he would lodge an appeal (on November 16, the justice minister, Jacques Toubon, took the unusual step of announcing that the public prosecutor's office would also appeal against the verdict).

Boulanger, a former police inspector, has in the past been reprimanded by his superiors in the judiciary following complaints by lawyers and investigating magistrates about the quirkiness of his verdicts.

He has also drawn attention to himself by taking out proceedings against residents near the law courts who had hung washing out in their windows, and by his alleged habit of chasing and booking any driver he sees jumping the lights.

In June NTM were due to perform at the Châteauvallon festival in Toulon. Following pressure from the city's FN mayor, Jean-Marie Le Chevallier, and the prefect of the Var département, Jean-Charles Marchiani, the director of the festival, Gérard Paquet, cancelled the NTM [illegible]

Paquet had managed to hold his own against the far-right city council for a year, refusing either to change the festival programme or to resign. But he was finally forced to back down when Marchiani urged Jean-Jacques Bonnaud, chairman of the board of Toulon's Théâtre National de la Danse et de l'Image, to ensure the NTM concert was cancelled.

Marchiani argued that the group's songs denigrated the image of women and the police. He said he was "shocked", as "a representative of the state, a Christian and a man", and would not allow "the dignity of women and mothers to be attacked".

He threatened to cut off the festival's subsidies if its organisers refused to comply. The culture minister, Philippe Douste-Blazy, made a public statement saying that he regretted the prefect's move and said that "law and order problems can not be settled by threatening to end subsidies".

Shen joined the debate by explaining that "fuck your mother" was an expression commonly used in the suburbs and meant no more than "get stuffed". But it was no use: the concert was cancelled.

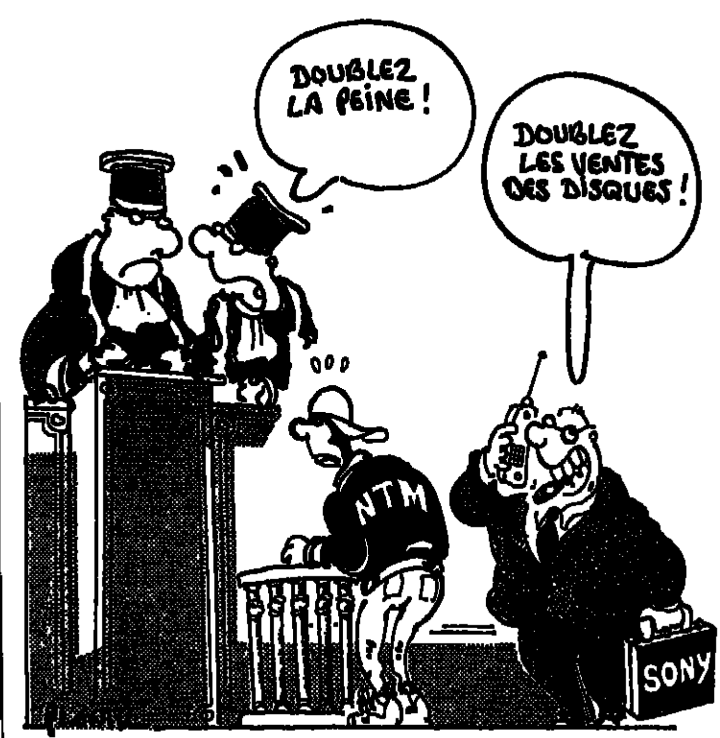
A month later, the same scenario presented itself in La Rochelle. The FN representative on the Poitou-Charentes regional council called for the concert that NTM were due to give at the Francofolies festival to be cancelled. But neither the prefect, nor the mayor of La Rochelle, nor its bishop intervened. On July 15, NTM's concert took place without incident.

NTM has come close to being taken to court before, notably when it brought out its second album, 1993: J'Appuie Sur La Gachette (1993: I Pull The Trigger). While the title song was about the suicide of an unemployed person, another number, "Police", was a direct attack on the force.

Shen refused to change a single line of the song: "I prefer things to be stated directly. Rap is street language. I can't understand why people accuse us of provocation.

"Despair is the way things really are. Some people think we exaggerate; I'd say we tend to understate."

(November 16)



'Double his sentence!' 'Double record sales'

Angry young men target police force

Stéphane Davet

THE group NTM used to be something of an exception on the French rap scene. Most rappers, like MC Solaar, had a reputation for preferring cool rhymes and rhythms to the violent diatribes of hardcore rap. All that is changing: there has recently been a proliferation of albums that express the problems and anxieties of life on suburban housing estates in particularly violent terms.

So far the only group, apart from NTM, to have got into trouble with the law has been Ministère Amer (Bitter Ministry). It is currently facing legal action from the interior ministry over its song, Sacrifice De Poulets (*poulet* — chicken — is a slang term for the police), which features on the soundtrack of the film La Haine (Hate).

In the US, many hardcore and gangsta rap groups pull no punches in describing their relationship with the law and society in general. In 1988 a Los Angeles group, Niggas With Attitude (NWA), caused an outcry with their song, "Fuck The Police".

Although the US police authorities have often been on a collision course with rap groups who threaten them, they usually try to get them censored or boycotted rather than jailed.

In 1992 a song called "Cop Killer", performed by the Californian rapper Ice T and distributed by Time-Warner, caused such a scandal that even George Bush alluded to it during the presidential campaign.

The FBI called for a boycott of Time-Warner products. A few years later, under shareholder pressure, the company scrapped most of its rap catalogue.

But rap is not the only musical genre that contains controversial lyrics. In Germany, a punk group called Flime has released an album called Polizei SA SS. And last month a far-right French group, Fraction Hexagone, brought out its first album. The group's emblem of a hammer and sword, symbolising the union of workers and soldiers, was first used by the journal Black Front, the organ of the revolutionary and anti-capitalist tendency in the German Nazi party led by Gregor and Otto Strasser.

Fraction Hexagone's disc has a song called Une Balle (A Bullet), which includes the lyrics: "One bullet for the Zionists, one bullet for the cosmopolitans, one bullet for the Yankees, one bullet for the —" (the word "police" is replaced by a beep). The FN refused to allow the song to be played at its Bleu-Blanc-Rouge jamboree, but the disc is freely available.

(November 9 and 16)

Cultural centres act as community police

Catherina Bédarida

A CONFERENCE in Paris on the problem of how to handle the increasing numbers of marginalised and homeless people who tend to congregate around many of the world's art centres was recently organised by the European Forum for Urban Security, headed by Martine Aubry, the Socialist deputy mayor of Lille and a former minister.

The conference was attended by representatives of 16 cultural institutions from various cities all over the world, including San Francisco's Exploratorium, New York's Hall of Science, Montreal's Biodome, Paris's hi-tech Parc de La Villette, Genoa's Porto Antico, Ljubljana's Metelkova, Johannesburg's Newtown Cultural Precinct, London's South Bank Centre and Marseille's La Belle de Mai.

Almost all of these institutions rely on some sort of surveillance system requiring the use of video cameras and guards. But the common denominator of all such bodies is their refusal to use repressive solutions.

Ewart Wooldridge, director of resources at the South Bank Centre in London, which includes the Royal Festival Hall and the Hayward Gallery, says: "However excellent the concert you attend, your evening is ruined if you have to clamber over a homeless person as you come out."

Yet he resists calling the police, preferring to keep the lines of communication open with the homeless and the skateboarders who use the area.

According to Christian Brûlé, head of the La Villette prevention association, his staff aim to make young people from underprivileged areas feel welcome. To prevent teenagers from the 19th *arrondissement*, where La Villette is located, causing trouble, he has set up two companies that offer the young a total of 26,000 hours of work a year as ushers and cloakroom attendants at open-air film screenings.

Last summer they acted as go-betweens with the public. They were as young and laid-back as the people they talked to, moved around on foot and in pairs, and displayed no symbol of authority except for their "security" armbands and walkie-talkies. The upshot was that tension and vandalism on the site decreased appreciably.

New York's Hall of Science is located in Queens, a difficult area of the city. Its head of programming, Peggy Cole, argues that problems of delinquency can be defused if a museum offers interesting activities and is seen to welcome visitors.

The Hall of Science, in collaboration with the neighbouring state schools, offers free admission two afternoons a week and regularly organises open-air exhibitions around the streets of Queens.

Genoa's city council started up its Porto Antico project in 1992. For 700 years the harbour area was under customs control and out of bounds to local inhabitants; a few decades ago it sank into disuse. With government help, the city decided to turn the area into a cultural precinct.

A large aquarium, a young people's library and a maritime museum have already opened. They rub shoulders with more commercial operations, such as a multiplex cinema, a music store and a yachting harbour. The architect in charge of this vast redevelopment is Renzo Piano, co-designer of the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

"The harbour district used to be a hotbed of prostitution, drug trafficking and smuggling," says Renato Picco, president of Porto Antico. "Now, the Teatro Sant'Agostino and the architecture faculty have opened there and the charm of the old streets appeals to tourists.

"While the site is still in the process of redevelopment, we keep the gates closed from 3am to 6am. But our aim is eventually to stay open all the time, as the local inhabitants have asked us to."

Picco claims there is no delinquency on the site, even though Genoa is notorious for drug trafficking, and has a high incidence of drug abuse.

After consulting the 16 institutions represented at the conference, Michel Marcus, director of the forum for European security, concluded that the presence of accessible cultural facilities had the effect of reducing neighbourhood tension. There were fewer security problems inside cultural centres than in the city outside.

In a bid to cut down theft, graffiti and brawls, San Francisco's Exploratorium, a science museum visited by 600,000 people a year, has set up a team of mediators and guides called "explainers", who explain scientific phenomena to the public, help them to operate apparatus, and guide school groups around.

The oldest "explainers" are of university age. Most are high-school kids, some of them recruited in so-called "high-risk" communities. They wear a special explainer's jacket, which is orange. Apart from that, the choice of hair-cut and other clothes is up to each individual.

Explainers are taken on for a period of four months and paid the minimum hourly wage. They are supervised by two former explainers, who ensure that regulations are observed. Anyone found in possession of drugs, for example, is immediately dismissed.

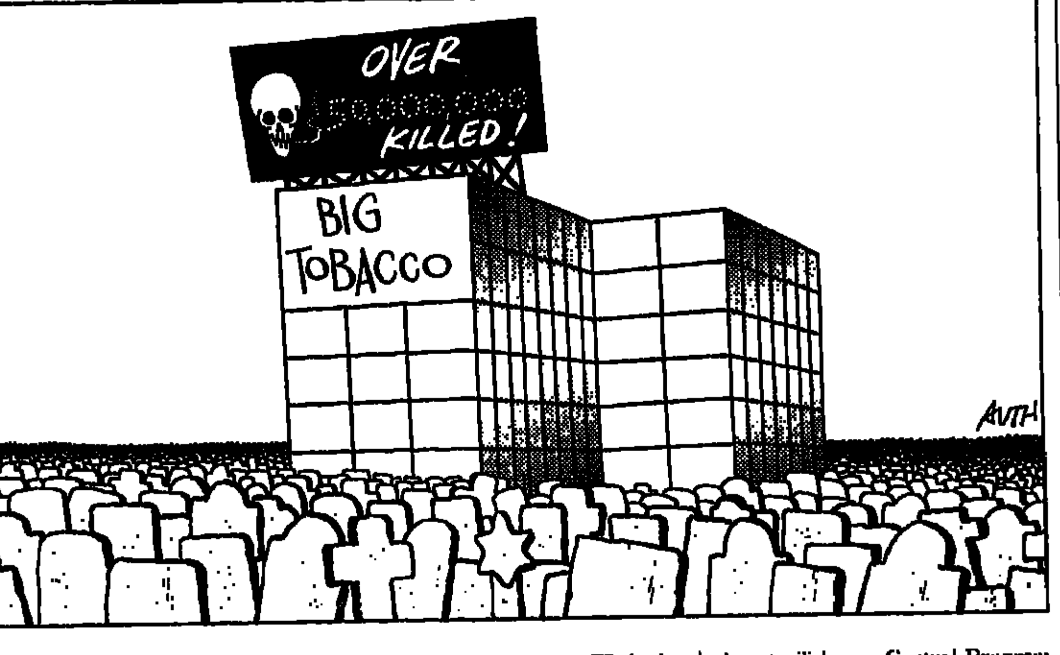
(November 16)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

The Washington Post

U.S. Aided Tobacco Firms in Asia Conquest

Glenn Frankel reports on how America's leading cigarette companies used trade laws to prise open a lucrative new market



ON THE STREETS of Manila, "jump boys" as young as 10 hop in and out of traffic selling Marlboros and Lucky Strikes to passing motorists.

In the discos and coffee shops of Seoul, young Koreans light up foreign brands that a decade ago were illegal to possess.

Downtown Kiev has become the Ukrainian version of Marlboro Country, with the gray socialist cityscape punctuated with colorful billboards of cowboy sunsets and chiseled faces.

And in Beijing, America's biggest tobacco companies are competing for the right to launch cooperative projects with the state-run tobacco monopoly in hopes of capturing a share of the biggest potential market in the world.

Throughout the bustling cities of a newly prosperous Asia and the ruined economies of the former Soviet Bloc, the American cigarette is king. At home, cigarette consumption has undergone a 15-year decline. Thanks to foreign sales, however, the companies are making larger profits than ever before.

But the industry did not launch its campaign for new overseas markets alone. The Reagan and Bush administrations used their economic and political clout to pry open markets in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and China for American cigarettes.

To this day, many U.S. officials see cigarette exports as strictly an issue of free trade and economic fairness, while tobacco industry critics and public health advocates consider it a moral question.

Even the Clinton administration finds itself torn: It is the most vocally anti-smoking administration in U.S. history, yet it has been in the uncomfortable role of challenging or delaying some anti-smoking efforts overseas.

At the same time, fledgling anti-smoking movements are rising up with support from American activists, passing restrictions that in some cases are tougher than those in the United States.

International epidemiologist Richard Peto of Oxford University estimates that smoking is responsible for 3 million deaths per year worldwide; he projects that 30 years from now the number will have reached 10 million, most of them in developing nations. In China alone, Peto says 50 million people who are currently 18 or younger eventually will die from smoking-related diseases.

Asia is where tobacco's search for new horizons began and where the industry came to rely most on Washington's help. U.S. officials in effect became the industry's lawyers, agents and collaborators. Prominent politicians such as Robert Dole, Jesse Helms, Dan Quayle and Al Gore played a role.

"No matter how this process spins itself out," George Griffin, commercial counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, told the public affairs manager of Philip Morris Asia in a January 1986, "I want to emphasize that the embassy and the various U.S. government agencies in Washington will keep the interests of Philip Morris and the other American cigarette manufacturers in the forefront of our daily concerns."

U.S. officials not only insisted that Asian countries allow American companies to sell cigarettes, but also demanded that the companies be allowed to advertise, hold giveaway promotions and sponsor concerts and sports events. They regularly consulted with company representatives and relied on the industry's arguments and research. And they ignored the protests of public health officials in the United States and Asia. This was, they insisted, solely an issue of free trade.

But then-Vice President Quayle suggested another motive when he told a North Carolina farming audience in 1990 that the government was seeking to help the tobacco industry compensate for shrinking markets at home. "We ought to think about the exports," he said. "We ought to think about opening up markets, breaking down the barriers."

A handful of American health officials vigorously opposed the government's campaign, but were stymied or ignored. "I feel the most shameful thing this country did was to export disease, disability and death by selling our cigarettes to the world," said former surgeon general C. Everett Koop. "What the companies did was shocking, but even more appalling was the fact that our own government helped make it possible."

Clayton Yeutter, high-octane Nebraska Republican with serious political aspirations, came to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) in 1985 with a mission: to put a dent in the record U.S. trade deficit by forcing foreign countries to lower their barriers against American products.

He took office when Washington was on the verge of declaring a trade war against some of its staunchest allies in the Far East. Asian tigers such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand were running up huge trade surpluses with the United States on goods ranging from T-shirts to computer chips to luxury sedans. The U.S. annual trade deficit in 1984 totaled a record $123 billion.

Yeutter knew that USTR had a powerful weapon in its arsenal. Section 301 of the 1974 Trade Act empowered USTR to launch a full-scale investigation of unfair trading practices and required that Washington invoke retaliatory sanctions within a year if a targeted government did not agree to change its ways. Yeutter persuaded the administration to allow him to use Section 301 aggressively.

The U.S. tobacco industry had been trying for years to get a foothold in these promising new Asian markets. In 1981 the big three — Philip Morris Inc., R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. and Brown & Williamson — had formed a trade group called the U.S. Cigarette Export Association to pursue industry-wide policy on the issue. But the companies had felt frustrated during the first term of the Reagan administration.

Japan, the West's second largest market for cigarettes, remained virtually closed to American brands because of high tariffs and discriminatory distribution. South Korean law effectively made it a crime to buy or sell a pack of foreign cigarettes. And Taiwan and Thailand remained tightly shut.

ALL EXCEPT Taiwan were signatories to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and Taipei hoped to join soon. Yet each appeared to violate free-trade principles.

When Yeutter and his staff looked at the cigarette business in these countries, they saw hypocrisy. Each Asian government sought to justify its ban on imported cigarettes in the name of public health, yet each had its own protected, state-controlled tobacco monopoly that manufactured and sold cigarettes.

But the very flaws of the state-run monopolies were exactly what a doctor might have ordered: Their high price and poor quality had helped limit smoking mostly to older men who had the money and taste for harsh, tar-heavy local brands. The monopolies seldom, if ever, advertised and did not target the great untapped markets of women and young people. Per-capita sales remained low in every country except Japan.

Gregory Connolly, an anti-smoking activist who heads the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program, has traveled widely through Asia and documented how American companies skirted advertising restrictions by sponsoring televised rock concerts and sporting events, placing cigarette brands in movies and lending their brand names to non-tobacco products such as clothing and sports gear.

The companies produced studies showing that aside from heavy aviation parts, cigarettes were America's most successful manufactured export in terms of the net balance of trade. They estimated that cigarette exports — largely to Western Europe and Latin America — accounted for 250,000 full-time jobs in the United States and contributed more than $4 billion to the positive side of the trade ledger.

In a January 1984 letter to an official in the Commerce Department, Robert Bockman, then director of corporate affairs for Philip Morris Asia, described trade barriers against his company's products in South Korea. He then went on to discuss what he called "the politics of tobacco in this election year. Attached please find a listing of the 1980 election results in the major tobacco-growing areas in the United States. You will note that the margin of victory for the president [Ronald Reagan] was narrow in some key areas."

Jesse Helms, R-North Carolina, who at the time chaired the Senate Agriculture Committee, also intervened. In July 1986 Helms wrote to Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone congratulating him on his recent election victory and pointing out that American cigarettes accounted for less than 2 percent of the Japanese market.

"Your friends in Congress will have a better chance to stem the tide of anti-Japanese trade sentiment if and when they can cite tangible examples of your doors being opened to American products," Helms wrote. "I urge that you make a commitment to establish a timetable for allowing U.S. cigarettes a specific share of your market. May I suggest a goal of 20 percent within the next 18 months."

At Yeutter's urging, Reagan decided not to wait for a formal filing from the industry against Japan. The White House filed three 301 complaints with USTR in September 1985, one of them against Japanese restrictions on the sale of U.S. cigarettes. Other U.S. bureaucrats began drawing up lists of products for possible retaliation.

In subsequent trade talks, Japanese negotiators hung tough through 14 sessions. Finally, a year after the 301 complaint was filed, the Japanese capitulated, signing an agreement allowing in American-made cigarettes.

Cigarettes became the second most-advertised product on television in Tokyo — up from 40th just a year earlier. Today, imported brands control 21 percent of the Japanese market and earn more than $7 billion in annual sales. Female smoking is at an all-time high, according to Japan Tobacco's surveys.

The next target was South Korea, which had a $1.7 billion domestic tobacco market. The U.S. tobacco industry filed a 301 complaint against Seoul in January 1988. USTR initiated an investigation a month later.

South Korea's state cigarette monopoly had done little advertising over the years, and a few months before the 301 case, the Seoul government had formally outlawed cigarette ads. But the United States insisted on defining "fair access" as including the right to advertise.

IN MAY 1988 Seoul formally agreed to open its doors to American brands. The deal allowed cigarette signs and promotions at shops, 120 pages of advertisements in magazines and cigarette company sponsorship of social, cultural and sporting events.

Cigarettes quickly became one of the most heavily advertised products in South Korea: from no advertising in 1986, American tobacco companies spent $25 million in 1988. Within a year, American companies had captured 6 percent of the market.

On the heels of the Japanese agreement, Taiwan had agreed in October 1985 to liberalize barriers to wine, beer and cigarettes. But a year passed and the market remained effectively closed. Reagan then ordered Yeutter to propose "proportional countermeasures," while U.S. officials threatened to oppose Taiwan's application for membership in GATT. Six weeks after Reagan's order, Taiwan folded.

Following the agreement, consumption of imported cigarettes in Taiwan soared. According to one industry trade journal, foreign brands went from 1 percent of annual cigarette sales to more than 20 percent in less than two years, while state manufactured brands declined accordingly.

RJR sponsored a dance at a Taipei disco popular with teenagers and offered free admission for five empty packs of Winstons. Studies by Taiwanese public health specialist Ted Chen, now a professor at Tulane University Medical Center, tracked a steadily rising rate of smoking among high schoolers.

The 301 cases were a boon to the industry. The Boston-based National Bureau of Economic Research estimated that sales of American cigarettes were 600 percent higher in the targeted countries in 1991 than they would have been without U.S. intervention.

In 1990, after he became secretary of agriculture, Yeutter said at a news conference: "I just saw the figures on tobacco exports here a few days ago and, my, have they turned out to be a marvelous success story."

Paradox of the Cannabis Cafe

Charles Trueheart in Delfzijl

AT THE Paradox Cafe in this North Sea harbor town of 30,000, customers are handed a tip sheet of warnings about cannabis: Do not smoke and drive. Do not smoke and drink. Do not take it across the border. Avoid "space-cake" — hashish baked in muffins.

On the other hand, the main menu item at the Cafe Paradox, other than coffee and natural fruit juices, is cannabis. The selection ranges from expensive Moroccan hashish to cheap Dutch marijuana, priced from $7 to $15 a gram.

"That's the paradox," explained Ernst Gunst, the cafe's manager. And not the only one.

Cafe Paradox, whose main product is technically illegal in the Netherlands, is a creature of Delfzijl's municipal government, aggressively championed by its mayor and heartily endorsed by police and magistrates.

Opened in September as a non-profit "foundation," the cafe is an experiment in cannabis regulation. The idea is to drive and keep criminal elements out of a business by taking it over, as state liquor stores were designed to do in the United States.

Delfzijl's step is perhaps the biggest yet taken in this already open-minded country toward waging peace on drugs instead of war.

The Netherlands for years has taken a progressive approach to what it calls "soft drugs." The law is known by a term that means "illegal but permitted" — that is, police put the lowest priority on enforcing the sale and use of small amounts of cannabis.

In light of this attitude, Delfzijl officials said they expect their cafe idea to spread across the Netherlands. Three other small towns have similar pilot programs underway.

The Dutch government is taking an open-minded attitude toward the experiments, waiting to see how they work and what local prosecutors report, an official of the Dutch Justice Ministry said.

Today in Holland at least 5 percent of the country's 15 million people are estimated to use a cannabis product regularly. But the use of hard drugs has plummeted, with the addiction rate half that in other European countries.

The tolerant policy toward soft drugs has spawned a ubiquitous fixture across the Netherlands: "coffee shops" and "teahouses" where the real attraction is something else. These establishments do big business in Amsterdam and other cities, including a lively tourist trade of Germans and Americans agog at the freedom to traffic and smoke while police officers stand on the corner looking the other way.

But what the authorities will tolerate in Amsterdam they apparently will not in Delfzijl, a quiet town just a half-hour's drive from the German border.

The bad image of the local coffee shops, the criminal transactions on the wholesale level inherent in running them and the suspicion that harder drugs were also being traded led Mayor Eduard Haaksman to launch a new program for prevention and regulation.

In a single sweep, the town shut down the cannabis trade at free-enterprise places such as De Corner and New Generation and opened the doors of Cafe Paradox.

"The war on drugs — we lost it a long time ago," said Paul Oldenburger, a local businessman and parent. He said he was cautiously open to the Cafe Paradox experiment if it meant the demise of the coffee shops. "These coffee shops, they don't just sell soft drugs. Hard drugs are available too, and it's an easy step from one to the other."

There is no sign outside the new establishment. It is an attractive if subdued space painted in yellow where a steel band plays from speakers and young people sit at tables puffing enormous reefers. Customers have to be 18 to enter.

"Use hashish and marijuana for pleasure and not to combat stress or insecurity," they are advised on the Paradox flyer. The place closes at 10pm.

The mayor has taken flak from the people he put out of the pot business, and from some parents and other outraged citizens. But he appeared unfazed. "It's a shop where we can discourage youngsters from using drugs, and it's a place where we can control it by having it in one place," Haaksman said. "Also, the shop has to sell only very good quality soft drugs, so that you know what you're getting."

What is the message of an organization that warns about the dangers of drugs and sells them over the counter?

"The message is: Don't do drugs. But if you want to use drugs, do it in a healthy, conscious way," said Gunst. "One thing is for sure. If you forbid it, people still want to use it, like the U.S. during Prohibition."

Gunst is proud of the cafe's offerings, noting that no artificial pesticides or fertilizers were used in their cultivation or manufacture. He said a professor at a nearby university is checking for impurities and the content levels of THC, the psychoactive ingredient in cannabis.

"We think that's important," Gunst said, sitting at a cafe table as he rolled a large, hashish-laden cigarette. "That's why we sell no soft drinks. Coca-Cola is just water and sugar. It's not healthy."

Gunst is especially proud of the "documentary center" he is designing in the back of the cafe — a place for drug presentations to police officers, doctors and school groups, for discussion of drugs by young people, and with an Internet hookup to access current information about drugs.

The Dutch government is aware that philosophical conundrums have to be addressed. "What are these places selling — legal stuff or not? We have to decide," Justice Ministry spokesman Wilfred Kortman said.

The Dutch government is under pressure from surrounding European Union members to police better the country's commerce in drugs. From Amsterdam's coffee shops and easy street trade, they seep easily over the blurring European borders, where customs procedures are no longer even a formality.

Self-Rule Proposed for Canada's Indians

Howard Schneider in Ottawa

CANADA'S governance of its aboriginal communities has failed and should be replaced by granting self-rule to as many as 80 separate Indian nations that would be provided with extensive land and resource rights, billions of dollars in extra aid and a new branch of Parliament to represent their interests, a blue-ribbon government commission reported last week.

In a 4,000-page, $40 million report, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People concluded that "Euro-Canada" had left the country's more than 800,000 Indians largely destitute, stripped of traditional lands and resources that should have been protected by treaty, and under immense pressure to assimilate into Western culture. The result: widespread poverty, high rates of alcoholism and teen suicide, and a growing potential for violence if Canada does not restructure the relationship with its original residents.

The commission suggested, in essence, that Canada start from scratch, renegotiating virtually every aspect of Indian governance and economics, and even soliciting the queen of England to embody the new beginning in a royal proclamation. One issued in 1763, Indian leaders say, recognized their rights to independent government and came at a time of cooperation with European settlers, but later it was ignored during decades of domination and mistreatment.

"Some leaders fear that violence is in the wind," the commission stated in its summary. "What aboriginal people need is straightforward, if not simple: control over their lives in place of the well-meaning but ruinous paternalism of past Canadian governments."

The panel was established in 1991 by then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney following a violent standoff between Mohawks and Quebec security officials. Mulroney appointed four of the commission's seven members from Indian communities and gave it a broad mandate to examine all aspects of Indian life. Its report came two years beyond its deadline, with tens of thousands of pages of testimony and reports collected, and with the distinction of being Canada's most expensive royal commission.

Indian leaders said the government should accept the commission's findings and begin implementing them immediately. "We call upon the government of Canada to deal with aboriginal peoples on a nation-to-nation basis, recognizing and encouraging the emergence of another order of government," said George Erasmus, a co-chairman of the commission.

But the impact of the document is uncertain. Its call for creation of dozens of self-governing nations is bound to echo in a country struggling to keep its European components — English and French speakers — unified. Within dozens of local communities, it will touch nerves as well. One recommendation, for example, would give Indian commercial fishermen priority over non-Indians during "times of scarcity" — an explosive issue in the struggling British Columbia salmon industry.

Likewise, the call for increased funding and a redistribution of land, timber, mineral, animal and other resources is likely to cause resentment throughout some parts of Canada; it was promptly criticized by the Western-based Reform Party as a waste of money.

Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin all but ruled out extensive extra spending and many of the more comprehensive ideas included in the study. He said the current Liberal Party government supports Indian self-determination and wants to equitably settle land, resource and other issues in a way that will allow the communities to be economically independent — and is doing so on a case-by-case basis around the country. But that must be done, he said, within the constraints of a government struggling to balance its budget.

But commission members and Indian leaders said it was time to abandon what they call a "project-by-project" approach that is neither quick nor comprehensive enough to address the problem. They want Canada to confront and correct an unpleasant part of its past.

The price tag is steep in Canada's current fiscal climate — about $27 billion over the next 20 years. The commission contended that will be more than offset as Indian communities become economically successful, develop businesses using their land and resources and stop having to rely on social services.

Miss World Picked Amid India Protest

Kenneth J. Cooper in Bangalore

THE MISS WORLD pageant went on here last weekend after police arrested more than 1,300 protesters and broke up crowds by firing tear gas and striking demonstrators with batons.

The crown went to Miss Greece, Irene Skliva, 18, a professional model, at a pageant that prompted an intense national debate about the role of women in the poorest country ever to host the annual contest.



Smiles abound as Irene Skliva of Greece is crowned Miss World in Bangalore PHOTO: KAMAL KISHORE

Feminists, asserting arguments also made in western countries, said that such pageants demean women by turning them into commodities. Hindu nationalists said Indian traditions give women a central role in families and do not countenance them parading before strangers.

The leader of a new women's group had threatened that a dozen members would sneak into the cricket stadium site and set fire to themselves to protest what they called the dishonoring of Indian women. But tight security that banned matches and cigarette lighters apparently succeeded in keeping the protesters out.

Kinay Narayana Shashikala, the group's leader, went into hiding last week to avoid arrest under a preventive detention law. Her disappearance and uncertainty about the identity of her followers raised questions about whether the suicide threat was made to promote the anti-pageant views of a Hindu nationalist party, which controlled media access to Shashikala.

Hundreds of Hindu nationalists affiliated with the Bharatiya Janata Party were arrested after they briefly blocked traffic at three major intersections in an unsuccessful attempt to cut off routes to the stadium.

But many residents of Bangalore, known in western countries for the computer software it produces, expressed pride that their city hosted the international event and criticized protesters for causing disruptions.

The days of protests did dampen the festive atmosphere and kept away some potential ticket buyers. A pageant spokesman said 15,000 of the 20,000 seats were sold.

Voters Gain From Access To Internet

Rajiv Chandrasekaran

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S campaign site on the Internet was packed with position papers, speech texts and economic growth charts. Republican nominee Bob Dole's camp used its site to raise money and attract volunteers. Third-party candidates, special interest groups and media organizations also flooded the global computer network with election-related material this year.

But did voters pay any attention? Sort of, say political scientists and pollsters.

According to a post-election poll released last week by Wirthlin Worldwide, 9 percent of voters surveyed said information they found on the Internet influenced their vote. That figure translates into about 8.5 million people nationwide.

Other recent surveys have reported that 10 percent to 12 percent of voters viewed politically oriented Internet sites during the campaign. By contrast, 11 percent of people said they received information from magazines and 19 percent said they used radio, according to a study conducted last month by the Pew Research Center. Television and newspapers each were cited by more than 60 percent of respondents.

Although Internet users remain a relatively small part of the electorate, several political analysts called the results released last week impressive for a medium that was essentially an obscure academic computer network during the 1992 campaign.

"When you're in the realm of 1 in 11 voters, clearly this is a medium that has an ability to deliver a message," said David Winston, a Washington pollster who developed the survey with Wirthlin, a market research firm based in McLean, Virginia.

Even though some voters said they were influenced by Internet sites, Winston and other political analysts said that the candidate home pages and other information likely did not change many minds. Most Internet users today tend to be affluent and well-educated, making them less likely to remain undecided during a campaign's homestretch.

Affirmative Action: It's Not That Simple

OPINION
William Raspberry

IT'S BEEN a rough season for affirmative action. California voters have just passed the California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI) which outlaws race or gender preferences in university admissions, employment and state contracting. Black Californians opposed it only by narrow margins.

One possible conclusion: Nobody much wants affirmative action.

Then there were the Supreme Court rulings against congressional districts drawn deliberately to give them black majorities. Many of us feared the decision might decimate the Congressional Black Caucus. They didn't.

The possible conclusion: Nobody needs affirmative action.

At Texaco, top managers allegedly were tape-recorded in good-ol'-boy bantering about how little value they placed on minority hiring, even though such hiring was official policy. A New York Times story described in some detail how managers manage to get around official anti-discrimination dicta.

Possible conclusion: Affirmative action doesn't work anyway.

Why are we so bent out of shape by something that nobody wants, that isn't needed and that doesn't work?

The first thing to say is: It's not that simple.

Talk to the leadership of the NAACP, Urban League and others in the pro-affirmative action leadership and they'll explain to you that affirmative action is about fairness, not race or sex preference. Affirmative action opponents, assisted by the media, have confused everybody into thinking black people are demanding preferences, not just a level playing field. They say it so earnestly it's hard not take them seriously.

But if they don't advocate preferences, why were they opposed to CCRI, which, in its essence, is a prohibition against preferences?

The Case of the Disappearing Disaster — the congressional decimation that never happened — serves perfectly the argument of those who insist that affirmative action has been a bad thing. This is the '90s, they tell me, and whites aren't anywhere near as racist as they used to be. Instead of running as black candidates — which usually does require a black majority for victory — black politicians should be running as candidates. Let them show their wares, and they might tempt some buyers. Then they'd go down the list: Harold Washington, Doug Wilder, David Dinkins, etc.

Now they've got some new names to add to their I-told-you-so list: the re-elected redistricted, including Cynthia McKinney, whose new 4th District is only a third black and reportedly has the largest concentrations of Jews in the South. Her opponent, John Mitnick, is Jewish.

And again, it's not that simple. What looks on its face to be a solid repudiation of racism may be a manifestation of the power of incumbency. McKinney has said that the only reason she won was that her earlier election — from the district the Supreme Court said had to be dismantled — had given the voters a chance to know her. The clear implication: If she had to start from scratch today, she'd have no shot.

It's what affirmative action supporters have long argued: a little special treatment for a little while, to level the playing field, and then let us compete in splendid colorblindness.

Is there a case to be made that it's time for "a little while" to be over? Isn't it becoming harder with every Ron Brown and Colin Powell to argue the necessity for racial preference? Can't the case be made that black Americans have performed well enough and long enough in positions of power and influence that there is no longer the automatic assumption of black incompetence?

But as Texaco reminds us: It's not that simple.

The jewel in the crown?

British universities' world-beating reputation pulls in ever more overseas students each year. But in this fiercely competitive international market, they cannot afford to be complacent, says **Peter Kingston**

BY ANY yardstick, British higher education is a spectacular export success. Despite baleful reports of crippling underfunding, dwindling resources and the cost of coming to the UK to study, Britain is a major player when it comes to counting the numbers of overseas students flocking to its universities and colleges.

British universities' net contribution to the national purse in 1994/95, according to the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, was £1 billion. The Department of Trade and Industry calculates the education and training industry is worth £7 billion.

In the last academic year nearly 190,000 overseas students — 81,297 from European Union countries — came to study at British HE institutions, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

"It's remarkable that so many people think the British higher education system is attractive and accessible enough for them to come and take part in," says David Elliott, the British Council's HE director and the manager of its unit responsible for promoting education overseas.

He clearly believes that British higher education is special, though he warns that this reputation could easily be dented by any player who tried to flog shoddy goods abroad. But he is also keen to dispel any complacency about Britain's fourth place behind the United States, France and Germany in attracting the overseas students. Recent history endorses his caution.

Although these students now make up about 11 per cent of the British university population, with numbers steadily rising in the face of keen competition from the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, it is barely a decade since numbers were plunging in the opposite direction. And they have only recently climbed back above levels in the late 1970s before the first Thatcher government triggered a collapse.

In response to that administration's demands for savings in public expenditure, the then Department of Education and Science decided the taxpayer should cease supporting students from outside the EU. Henceforth, overseas students would be charged the full whack as each institution calculated it.

The response was immediate. The Department for Education and Employment's own figures, which included overseas students in further education, showed that the 82,000 studying in Britain in 1979/80, the last year before full-cost fees were introduced, had dropped to 62,000 a year later.

It was decided that the British Council, which had long promoted higher education abroad, should lead the bid for recovery. Efforts were targeted on the leading overseas providers such as Malaysia. Fairs were launched and invitations showered on foreign governments to visit campuses. It was stressed that the standard three-year British undergraduate degree was a year shorter than its counterparts in the main English-speaking competitor countries. The one-year taught masters degree was a year shorter than the US model.

The average cost of a three-year undergraduate honours science degree in England, Northern Ireland and Wales is £22,266 compared with £48,412 for a four-year honours degree in a private US university (including such names as Harvard and Yale) and £22,820 in a public US university. The equivalent figures for non-science degrees are £18,222 in Britain, and £48,412 and £22,820 in the US. A four-year honours science degree in Australia costs £28,056 (non-science £20,396).

The average total living costs are £13,050 for a three-year undergraduate course in the UK compared with £17,784 for the same period in Australia — £23,712 for the four-year honours course. The equivalent cost over four years in the US is £23,172. The average science postgraduate in the UK pays £13,422 a year, including living costs (£12,067 non-science). The equivalent cost in a US private university is £18,769 for all postgraduate courses. In Australia it is £14,824 for science and £13,044 otherwise.



Overseas students at the London School of Economics are among the thousands who choose British colleges PHOTO: MARTIN GODWIN

The Council's Education Counselling Service carried out market surveys to find out the advantages and disadvantages of the British system, when compared with its English-speaking competitors.

Surveys showed that personal recommendation was the prime factor. Apart from this, the main lure was the reputation for high quality.

But has this glowing reputation suffered from the recent public debates about declining standards, rapid expansion, underfunding and overstretched resources? "So far, the statistics suggest that the scare stories about declining standards have not deterred people, but if we wait for the statistics to change it may be too late," says Mr Elliott.

To avoid future damage, he suggests some institutions become more responsible in what they promise the punters. "Occasionally the marketing by British universities over-eggs things. People are not meant to be as wary of university salesmen as of used-car salesmen."

He also calls for alleviation of the pressures on British universities: "There's got to be a realisation that you can't run the British higher education system as a major international concern if it can't compete fairly. It's got to have more income, and it's got to use that income more effectively."

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES

Lecturer

Requirements: A MA degree or at least 5 years tertiary training in Library and Information Studies; extensive professional experience, including computerised cataloguing with Micro CDS-ISIS, thesaurus and database construction, AACR II and DDC 20.

Job description: Lecturing and practical sessions in introductory and advanced manual or computerised cataloguing with Micro CDS-ISIS; classification, indexing, thesaurus and database construction; theory of information retrieval and bibliograph description; administrative duties within the Department.

FACULTY OF SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS

Associate Professor

Requirements: Ph.D or D.Sc in Statistics or Mathematical Statistics; at least 8 years tertiary teaching experience; proven research record with appropriate publications and international journals.

Job description: Teaching of Statistics, specialising in Distribution Theory, Analysis of Variance, Experimental Design, Quality Control and Multivariate Statistics.

Date of assumption of duties: 1 January 1997.

Closing date: 29 November 1996.

Contact person: Ms D Nashandih-Endjambi at +264-61-206-3101/2.

Fringe benefits: The University of Namibia offers competitive salaries and the following fringe benefits: • pension fund/gratuity scheme • medical aid scheme • annual bonus • housing scheme • generous leave privileges • relocation expenses.

Non-Namibian citizens may be appointed for a 3-year, renewable contract period.

Application procedure: Applications in writing, accompanied by a curriculum vitae stating full details of present salary notch, increment date, the earliest available date when duty can be assumed and including three referees should be submitted to: The Head, Recruitment and Administration, University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia. Preliminary telegraphic applications may be made via telex 56-727 or fax +264-61-206-3843/206-3003.





ADMARK S5648/P612

British Council Teaching Centres

ELT Outreach Coordinator, Bogota, Colombia

The British Council has a vacancy for this new post which will be based in the Council's English Language Teaching Centre in Bogota, Colombia. It represents an exciting opportunity to work with education providers in Colombia to improve the quality of English language teaching. Whilst the post will be based in Bogota, the work will not be restricted to the capital and will involve quite a lot of travel within Colombia.

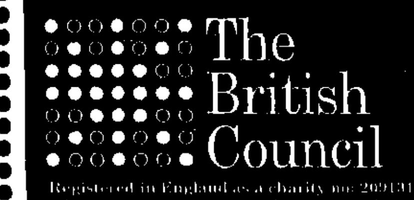
The main duties of the post will include the marketing of the Teaching Centre's consultancy and professional support services to schools and universities; negotiating agreements, carrying out consultancies; professional follow up and support to institutions; organising and running teacher training courses and workshops with the assistance of other Teaching Centre staff; maintaining the Council's profile in the ELT constituency, organising workshops, attending conferences etc. The applicant will need to be able to work independently, feel confident about negotiating with head teachers, rectors of universities as well as dealing directly with EFL teachers at all levels. They will need to be able to assist with the implementation of change in institutions in a sensitive and authoritative manner.

Salary and benefits: include salary on a scale from 1,200,000 Colombian pesos to 1,634,000 Colombian pesos per month (9 point scale), paid 14 times per year, plus 2 salary points, plus a Special Responsibility Allowance of 12.5%, medical cover, baggage allowance and return airfares. current rate of exchange: approx.1,600 pesos to £1 sterling.

Contract start date: as soon as possible. The contract will be for 2 years in the first instance.

Qualifications: candidates will require a diploma level TEFL qualification plus at least 5 years' TEFL teaching experience. They will also have extensive Young Learners' and teacher training experience, an excellent command of Spanish and word processing skills. Experience of outreach work with schools/universities would be an advantage.

Application forms are available from Calice Miller, Recruitment Unit, Central Management Direct Teaching, The British Council 10 Spring Gardens, London, SW1A 2BN. Telephone 0171 389 4931, fax 0171 389 4140. Completed applications should be returned no later than 17 January 1997.



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Senior Lecturer/ Associate Professor

Requirements: A doctorate in Human Movement Studies/Physical Education with Sport Science as field of specialisation; experience with regard to teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate level; research interest in relevant fields of study, an interest in Sport Psychology, and ideally experience with regard to developing countries.

Job description: Teaching, supervision of undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations, research, community service, participation in teaching practice, in-service education.

Date of assumption of duties: 1 February 1997.

Closing date for applications: 15 December 1996.

Contact person: Ms D Nashandih-Endjambi at +264-61-206-3101/2.

Fringe benefits: The University of Namibia offers competitive salaries and the following fringe benefits: • pension fund/gratuity scheme • medical aid scheme • annual bonus • housing scheme • generous leave privileges • relocation expenses.

Non-Namibian citizens may be appointed for a 3-year, renewable contract period.

Application procedure: Applications in writing, accompanied by a curriculum vitae stating full details of present salary notch, increment date, the earliest available date when duty can be assumed and including three referees should be submitted to: The Head, Recruitment and Administration, University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia. Preliminary telegraphic applications may be made via telex 56-727 or fax +264-61-206-3843/206-3003.




ADMARK S5652/P627

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You will need: • extensive experience of practical programme work with at least 2 years relief and/or development experience • experience of working in an area prone to conflict • proven management, analytical and organisational skills • experience of working to a strategic plan, budgeting and financial controls • experience in one or more of the following: pastoralism, agriculture, water and health • excellent communication and report writing skills with fluency in written and spoken English • knowledge of Arabic useful.

The ability to manage a team in an isolated and potentially stressful situation is also essential.

Please quote ref: OS/PM/SS/AD/GW.
Closing date: 2 January 1997.
Interview date: Mid January 1997.

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Ref: OS/REA/WA/AD/GW
Key competencies: • direct experience of emergency relief and rehabilitation work, preferably in West Africa • experience of working in conflict areas • sound analytical skills and experience in research and emergency preparedness planning • proven training skills.

Both posts require: • at least 3 years wide-ranging relief and development experience • mature understanding of relief and development issues • high level communication skills • ability to travel widely and often in region • fluent French and English • commitment to Oxfam's overall aims and objectives.
Closing date: 3 January 1997.
Interview date TBA.

For further details and an application form please send a large SAE to: International Human Resources, Overseas Division, Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ, quoting appropriate reference.

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Key competencies: • Applicants should be at least part qualified ACA/CPA/CIMA or equivalent • Have experience of budget preparation, production of management information, donor reporting, personnel management, office management, procurement, stock control and vehicle management • Good interpersonal skills and the ability to manage in a multi-cultural context • Ability to work as part of a team • Ability to live and work effectively in difficult physical and security conditions • Fluent written and spoken English • Commitment to the overall aims of Oxfam, particularly to promoting gender equity in all aspects of Oxfam's work.

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For further information and an application form please send a SAE to:
International Human Resources, Oxfam,
274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ.
Please quote ref: OS/DPMA/IKA/AD/GW.
Closing date: 3 January 1997.
Interview date: mid January 1997.

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Witness to famine

Mohamed Amin

MOHAMED "Mo" Amin, the Kenyan television cameraman widely acclaimed for bringing Ethiopia's catastrophic famine in 1984 to world attention, died in the hijacked airliner which crashed in the Indian Ocean at the weekend.

His film of the starving and dying was dubbed the "celluloid seconds that stabbed a billion hearts". It jolted the world into a huge relief effort, which included the Live Aid rock concert beamed around the globe, and raised £50 million to ease the famine.

Michael Buerk, the BBC newsreader who worked with him on many assignments, said: "I was with him when he lost several of his nine lives. He was one of the greatest of front-line cameramen. He was brilliant, he was brave, he was human and very, very driven."

Amin worked for Reuters Television, and won numerous awards in a career that began when he was a 13-year-old schoolboy with a camera covering the East African car rally and spanned four decades.

He had half his left arm blown off by a rocket while filming an exploding ammunition dump in Addis Ababa soon after the Ethiopian capital fell to rebels in June 1991. His soundman, John Mathai, was killed.

Amin had an artificial limb made in the United States and a


Amin: hijack victim

television camera adapted so he could carry on filming.

His Punjabi father was working on the East African railways when Amin was born. At the age of 11 he acquired a Box Brownie camera, and his future career was decided.

In 1969 Amin became British Cameraman of the Year for his coverage of the assassination of Kenya's economic and planning minister, Tom Mboya. He not only filmed the event, but also organised transport and accompanied the mortally wounded politician to Nairobi hospital.

Amin was awarded an MBE in 1992 to honour 30 years of covering troublespots in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

David Sharrock

Mohamed Amin, cameraman, born August 29, 1943; died November 23, 1996



Mandarin who refused to grovel

Lord Bancroft

LORD BANCROFT, the former head of the Civil Service, who has died aged 73, was the epitome of the Establishment mandarin: cautious, precise to the point of fastidiousness, and fighting to the end to try to preserve Whitehall's traditional values. His death truly marks the passing of an era, made more poignant by the present controversy over the abuse of civil servants for party political purposes.

He warned 10 years ago about what he called the subtle and insidious dangers of Civil Service politicisation. "The dangers are of the younger people, seeing that advice which ministers want to hear falls with a joyous note on their ears . . . they [will] trim, make their advice what ministers want to hear rather than what they need to know."

It all started with Margaret Thatcher: the prime minister and Bancroft, her chief mandarin, were like chalk and cheese, in personal chemistry as much as outlook. He paid due deference to his political master, and recognised that the mandarinate needed some shaking-up — "we were stunningly good at re-inventing the wheel," he conceded. But he also made clear that, in his view, Thatcher was undermining the central job of the politically neutral Civil Service to give objective advice to ministers without fear or favour. "Conviction politicians, certainly," he said, "conviction civil servants, no." He subsequently mused about what he called the high "grovel count" among both officials and ministers under the Thatcher government.

An episode early in her Downing Street reign provides an illuminating insight into Bancroft's world at the pinnacle of his official career. Worried about the friction between Thatcher and the mandarin class, Willie Whitelaw arranged an informal encounter between the PM and the permanent secretaries.

They were on the defensive, shaken by what they regarded as her hectoring tone which they were entirely unused to. As Sir Frank Cooper, then permanent secretary at the Ministry of Defence, left to relieve himself, one of his colleagues remarked to another: "Thank God! Frank's gone to get the SAS to get us out of here."

According to Professor Peter Hennessy, author of a magisterial study of Whitehall, the evening meeting ended abruptly at 10pm when Thatcher said: "Gentlemen! Your cars are waiting."

It was not long before Bancroft was deprived of his official car and his post. In 1981 Thatcher abolished his Civil Service Department and with it the self-standing post of Head of the Home Service.

Bancroft was educated at Coatham School, Cleveland, and won a scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford. He served in the Rifle Brigade in the second world war and painted the words "St James' Infirmary Blues" — he was a fan of Louis Armstrong — on his Bren gun carrier.

He joined the Treasury in 1947, and soon embarked on the traditional route to the top as private secretary to three successive Chancellors, including Jim Callaghan, who later described Bancroft as "my strong right arm for three years." In 1975 he was appointed permanent secretary at the Department of the Environment and in 1978, a year before Thatcher's first election victory, head of the Civil Service.

Bancroft, once described by a Civil Service union leader as "smooth as monumental alabaster", described himself as "inclined by temperament and training to understatement". Yet he could be entertainingly and purposefully sharp; he once heard ministers praising civil servants; they did so, he observed, "through gritted teeth".

In a letter to the Times shortly after Thatcher imposed a trade union ban at the GCHQ intelligence-gathering centre in January 1984, he said he did not know enough about the harm done by selective strikes there to comment on the merits of the Government's action.

But he said that like many others he disliked limiting civil liberties and added: "What is beyond dispute is that the handling has been breathtakingly inept: a further example of the bloody fool branch of management science."

He had strong convictions of his own. A year ago in the Guardian, he delivered a stinging attack on the Government, accusing ministers of opening the way to corruption by undermining the central pillar of the century-old tradition of fair and open competition untainted by political bias.

Richard Norton-Taylor

Ian Powell Bancroft, Lord Bancroft, civil servant, born December 23, 1922; died November 19, 1996

CLASSIFIED



Italy rejoins exchange rate mechanism

John Palmer in Brussels

THE Italian lira this week rejoined the European exchange rate mechanism, four years after it was forced out of the system at the same time as sterling.

European Union finance ministers and central bank governors agreed that the lira could re-enter the ERM at 990 lire to the German mark after a tense eight-hour meeting in Brussels.

The decision came only hours before the opening of the international financial markets in the Far East and was hailed by the Italian government as marking a great step towards its participation in the single European currency to be launched in 1999.

But the breakthrough came only after Italy had agreed to German demands for a much stronger exchange rate than had been sought originally by the Rome government.

Its request for an exchange rate of more than 1,000 lire to the mark was rejected by other EU governments, led by France and Germany, who feared it might give Italian industry an unjustified competitive edge.

Although the re-entry of the lira clears the way for Italy to join the monetary union, German officials insisted that no final decision would be taken until early in 1998 about which countries should qualify for the single currency.

Under the terms of the Maastricht treaty, membership of the ERM is a prerequisite for countries wishing to sign up for the single currency. On the basis that monetary union does go ahead on schedule at the beginning of 1999, countries have until the end of the year to join the system.

However, both the UK and Sweden have argued against this condition for monetary union on the grounds that the ERM now is very different from that which was in operation when the Maastricht treaty was signed. Britain has made clear it will not rejoin the ERM, while Sweden's central bank governor, Urban Baeckström, said: "Surely it is exchange rate stability as such which matters, not the institutional arrangement?"

The German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, said that he wanted to see as many countries as possible sign up for the first wave of monetary union.

However, he stressed there could be no weakening of the Maastricht criteria which set limits for public sector debt and deficits, inflation and interest rates. "The Maastricht criteria must be met without ifs and buts, and that means in the long term," Mr Kohl said in a speech to 800 European bankers in Frankfurt last week.

A devaluation of the French franc was disavowed by French ministers at the meeting in Brussels. "France has no need of any devaluation against other EU currencies, because it has a significant trade surplus," one French source said.


Turned back . . . Clutching his West Bank identity card, a Palestinian is taken off a bus by Israeli border police and refused entry to Israel and Jerusalem PHOTOGRAPH: JIM HOLLANDER

Left to rot in a siege economy

Kathy Evans on the plight of Palestinians caught in Israel's blockade

A HUGE poster greets visitors to Gaza as they leave the Israeli checkpoint. It says "Working for Peace", and underneath is a list of the projects under way in the fledgling state which cannot yet speak its name: Palestine.

My Palestinian colleague looked contemptuously at the poster as we drove off into the dishevelled city of Gaza. "That's bullshit," he laughed. "There is no peace and there is no work."

Thirty months after Yasser Arafat touched down on Palestinian soil and the Palestinian flag was raised in freedom for the first time, the administration he governs looks as fragile as the peace process from which it was born. The flags may flutter, the traffic policemen may be Palestinian, and departments may call themselves ministries, but the reality is that its people and economy live, impoverished by an Israeli blockade, in cantons which feel more like prisons than pockets of freedom from occupation.

The next few weeks will show whether the peace process will survive at all. So far the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, has proved reluctant to live up to his predecessor's agreement on the Arab city of Hebron, where 400 Jews live, guarded by 800 Israeli troops in a city of 100,000 Arabs. The troops should have been out of most of the city by March.

Outside his office settlers with placards saying "Hebron First, next Jerusalem" provide a painful reminder of the response redeployment will bring from his rightwing supporters. Meanwhile Israeli newspapers fuel Jewish fears by talk of possible massacres.

The punishing blockade mounted in the name of security after the series of Hamas bombings last February and March is designed, Israeli officials say, to keep the terrorists out. But not one terrorist act has been committed by a Palestinian worker with an Israeli work permit.

Moreover, the violence has continued even with the blockade. Palestinian officials argue — and foreign aid donors agree — that the closure has the added benefit to Israel of keeping the Palestinian economy subservient to Israel's and its people reliant on Israeli goods and services.

At the cargo checkpoint at Qarni on the border of Gaza, the policy is clear. Over a glass of mint tea Sergeant Zohra, who is in charge of the Palestinian side, says that before the February blockade an average of 200-300 trucks passed through into Israel daily carrying Palestinian exports, and another 500 trucks came in with Israeli products. Last week the daily average had fallen to 25 outward and 120 inward bound. Some days only five manage to get through, he says.

"It's economic war. Sometimes they delay vegetables three weeks in security."

Before the blockade about 150,000 Palestinians used to work in Israel, providing cheap labour to the construction sector, industry and agriculture. Today the figure is about 50,000, of which only 15,000 come from Gaza. Only married men over 30 years of age with unblemished security records qualify for work in Israel.

The blockade and the pass laws have left Mr Arafat's Palestinian Authority (PA) tottering on the verge of bankruptcy, leaving Western aid donors to pick up the tab. Aid which was intended for development has been diverted to keeping the authority going and ensuring its bureaucrats and teachers are paid.

THIS YEAR the deficit is expected to be $182 million, all paid for by Western donors, and each day the blockade continues the Palestinian economy loses about $5 million. Not surprisingly, the country's GNP has dropped by 20 per cent.

This has left Western aid donors angered by the thought that they are, in the end, subsidising the Israeli blockade of Palestine. So far, discreet behind-the-scenes pressure from the US and Europe has failed to ease the closure significantly.

In the initial excitement of the authority's establishment, Western aid donors pledged some $2.4 billion to foster development. About $500 million was earmarked for 1995 alone, mostly for infrastructure projects and employment generation. But Palestinian officials say that only $43 million has been received so far, and that the gap between pledges and disbursements is growing.

Thirty months ago, when Mr Arafat arrived, there was hope not only of Western aid but of a flood of money from the Palestinian diaspora. About $600 million actually arrived, and property prices boomed in the six months which followed the authority's establishment, and apartment buildings mushroomed in both Gaza and the West Bank.

But after the bombings and Mr Netanyahu's arrival the initial flush of enthusiasm waned as Israel's blockade began to bite, and the hoped-for billions failed to materialise. The tens of thousands of Palestinian emigres who arrived with dreams of rebuilding their homeland gradually drifted back into exile.

For those Palestinian businessmen who remain, the daily fight is to get their goods in and out from Israel. Their great hope is that one day soon Palestine will have its own port and airport in Gaza, as was promised in the Oslo accords. Only with its own access can Palestine breathe and the task of building a semi-independent economy begin.

At present all its imports and exports have to be handled by Israeli clearing agents. Endless security checks at Israel's ports delay consignments, sometimes for weeks at a time. Businessmen say that about 800 containers destined for Palestine are languishing at the Israeli ports of Ashdod and Haifa, all paying $30 a day demurrage costs — which are of course passed on to consumers.

But the negotiations on the port and the airport have been stalled by Israel's insistence that its security forces should have the right to examine all incoming passengers and cargo. It also insists that Gaza airport civil aviation should be headed by an Israeli director-general, and refuses to let the airport be called Gaza International. The PA has rejected Israel control of security as contrary to the agreements.

Another key link already agreed but far from implemented is a safe corridor between Gaza and the West Bank. Only with such a link can the port of Gaza serve the import needs of the West Bank. Only then will Palestinians be able to pass between their two territories without asking the army.

Projects have been drawn up by foreign donors for a raised or fenced-in road linking Gaza to Hebron 40km away. So far there is no sign of any agreement. To the Netanyahu government it smacks too much of the beginnings of independence and statehood.

US salutes Apec deal

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Manila

PRESIDENT Clinton emerged from a summit of 18 Asian and Pacific rim countries on Monday claiming to have won "a big deal" by persuading them to accept 2000 as a target date for introducing free trade in information technology.

The agreement provided the most eye-catching initiative in a commitment by leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) forum to liberalise trade among a group accounting for more than half of world production.

US officials hailed Mr Clinton's success in persuading Apec leaders to adopt a deadline for cutting tariffs on information technology that their ministers had earlier resisted — even with the let-outs provided by the carefully hedged language of the leaders' statement.

This called for the conclusion of an information technology agreement by the ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation this month "that would substantially eliminate tariffs by the year 2000".

Mr Clinton said the agreement offers opportunities to increase US exports of information technology already worth $100 billion a year.

However, Malaysia's prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad, expressed satisfaction with the final wording because of its flexibility. The deadline is "not binding: that means it depends on the abilities of countries concerned to open up their markets," he said.

China announced that by 2000 it will lower average tariffs from 23 per cent to 15 per cent, although the product range has yet to be settled.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates November 25	Sterling rates November 18
Australia	2.0601-2.0626	2.1098-2.1138
Austria	17.87-17.89	17.65-17.67
Belgium	52.32-52.42	51.66-51.79
Canada	2.2423-2.2444	2.2403-2.2425
Denmark	9.74-9.76	9.63-9.64
France	8.59-8.60	8.46-8.48
Germany	2.5399-2.5424	2.5088-2.5113
Hong Kong	12.92-12.93	12.92-12.93
Ireland	0.9988-1.0004	0.9970-0.9994
Italy	2,514-2,517	2,525-2,528
Japan	188.03-188.31	186.13-186.34
Netherlands	2.8498-2.8531	2.8130-2.8163
New Zealand	2.3456-2.3487	2.3562-2.3592
Norway	10.70-10.71	10.58-10.59
Portugal	256.21-256.45	253.67-253.90
Spain	213.64-213.81	211.21-211.39
Sweden	11.10-11.13	11.02-11.04
Switzerland	2.1444-2.1471	2.1195-2.1224
USA	1.6722-1.6732	1.6715-1.6710
ECU	1.3173-1.3186	1.3067-1.3081

FTSE100 Share Index up 92.8 at 4064.8. FTSE 250 Index up 22.1 at 4422.4. Gold down $3.75 at $375.50.

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Benefits of the ivy league

Mark Cocker

The holly and the ivy
When they are both full grown
Of all the trees that are in the wood
The holly bears the crown

IN THE coming weeks these famous lines will help to evoke the season's perennial sense of festivity. We may come to sing the words ourselves. We may even go to collect holly or, at least, buy wreaths out of respect for the tree's long-standing magical associations and religious symbolism. But one thing that will be missing from all this Yuletide plant lore will be any thought for the carol's co-star — the ivy.

Unlike holly, ivy has virtually vanished from our repertoire of natural symbols. During Christmas few of us will deck the house with its glossy leaves as a token of good cheer. Even fewer, if any, will honour its sovereign power against evil, hanging garlands above the door to ward off malign spirits.

In fact, if this magical shrub can evoke any emotional response today it is normally to do with morbidity and decay. Ivy is the plant *par excellence* of the Gothic tale. It's the roost site for the owl and its haunting call. Ivy's luxuriant branches entwine and suffocate the ruined castle. And, when a dramatic shaft of lightning strikes, ivy, with its dark, melancholy foliage, is invariably part of the momentarily illuminated scene.

Of course, all these stereotypical images capture authentic aspects of the plant's rich ecology. Found throughout Europe and across northern and central Asia, the species thrives in shade or in damp soils and requires physical support to flourish. Buildings or trees are the structures on which it most frequently gains a footing. But once established it is capable of prolific growth.

Friends in London annually remove about 100kg of ivy from their two-storey house, and even then the single plant has broken through onto the top floor and expanded across the bathroom.



ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

Many of the species' negative associations derive from the myth that it is a parasite which slowly drains its host of energy. Although its climbing stems do attach themselves by means of numerous tiny roots, they don't penetrate the tree trunk nor extract nutrients. It is possible that a big specimen will eventually become too heavy for its host and cause its collapse, but the tree is often already weakened by some other means.

Ivy's evergreen foliage is, as the horror stories often indicate, a favoured site for owls. But it also shelters many other roosting birds, especially in winter when it may be the only thick cover available. Another benefit of its curious life cycle is that it flowers from September to November. When most other plants have finished, ivy's profuse spread of green blooms provide unseasonal nectar and pollen for autumn insects.

Another wider environmental service is linked to the late development of the berries. These don't usually start to ripen until the New Year has turned, when most other trees are becoming exhausted. Thus, at the time of least abundance ivy once more comes to the rescue. Wood pigeons and thrushes are especially grateful for the black fruits of the Bentwood tree. No wonder our more nature-sensitive ancestors looked upon ivy as a symbol of good luck.

So next time you are asked to remember that, "of all the trees in the wood the holly bears the crown", or even after you have just stabbed your hands on the holly's sharp prickles, try and save one small blessing for its poor relation: the late-flowering, fruit-bearing, bird-feeding, roost-providing, shelter-giving, and prickle-free ivy.

Chess Leonard Barden

WHEN the UK league began its fourth season at Blackburn in October with a record 18 teams, the focus of attention was British Chess Magazine v Richmond.

On the top two boards, the BCM's experienced grandmasters Chandler and Mestel met Luke McShane, aged 12, the wunderkind of British chess, and Richard Bates, aged 17, who with two title norms already looks en route to becoming our youngest international master. Would the GMs be scalped?

Bates v Mestel

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 b4 "The Speckled Egg" variation, according to GM Keith Arkell who plays it regularly. White plans a rapid Q-side expansion to divert Black from his usual K-side attack. **Bg7 4 e3 0-0 5 Bb2 d6 6 Nbd2 Nbd7 7 Rb1** Guarding the B stops the freeing tactic e5 dxe5 Ng4. **b6?!** Qe8! (threatens e5) 8 Nc4 b6 looks more accurate.

8 b5 Bb7 9 c4 Re8 10 Be2 e5 Black has achieved his thematic advance, but the rook is best at f8 where it supports a later pawn push. **11 0-0 e4 12 Ne1 c5** A sign that Black's opening has gone badly. The normal play h5 with Nf8-h7-g5 and Bg4 is too slow here with the Bb7 misplaced. **13 bxc6 Bxc6 14 Ba3!** Seizing on Black's weak spot. **Qc7 15 Nc2 Bb7 16 Rb3 Nf8 17 Nb1!** Regrouping towards d5. **Ba6 18 Rc3 Ne6 19 Nb4 Bb7 20 Rc1 Qd7 21 Nc3 h5 22 Nbd5 Ng5** At last the thematic plan, but too late.

23 Nb5! Bxd5 24 cxd5 Nxd5 25 Qb3 Qe6 If the knight moves, 26 Nc7. **26 Bc4** Now White wins a piece and easily beats off Black's belated K-side attack.

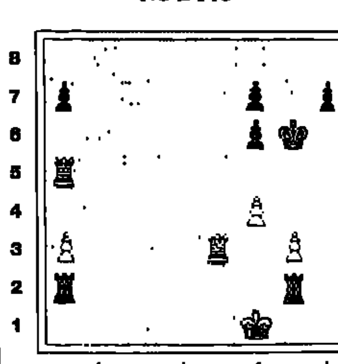
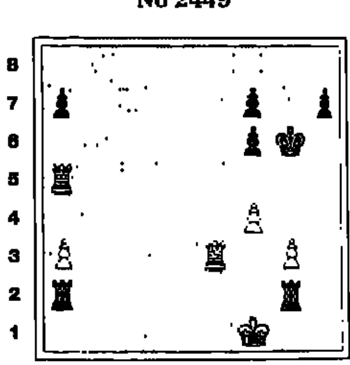
Nf3+ 27 gxf3 Qh3 28 Bxd5 Re5 29 Bxd6 exf3 30 Bxf3 Qxf3 31 Bxe5 Bxe5 32 Qd1 Bxh2+ 33 Kxh2 Resigns

Murray Chandler's new book The Complete c3 Sicilian (Batsford, £14.99) is an excellent up-to-date survey of a line that helped IBM's super-computer, Deep Blue, defeat Garry Kasparov. Play it, and your opening homework against the Sicilian is greatly reduced. McShane took on the author in his backyard, but his apparently solid formation was blown apart by 7 e5! and Black's game was already hopeless at move 10.

Chandler v McShane

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d6 3 d4 Nf6 4 Bd3 Nbd7 5 Nf3 Qc7 6 0-0 b6? 7 e5! dxe5 8 dxe5 Nxe5? 9 Nxe5 Qxe5 10 Qf3 Nd5 If Rb8 11 Bf4 wins, or if Qd5 11 Bb5+ Bd7 12 Bxd7+ Kxd7 13 Rd1. **11 c4 e6 12 cxd5 Bd6 13 g3 Bb7 14 Nc3 0-0-0 15 Bf4 Qf6 16 Ne4 Bxd5 17 Ba6+ Kb8 18 Bxd6+ Rxd6 19 Qxf6 gxf6 20 Nxd6 Resigns**

No 2449

Tony Miles v Jan Timman, Tilburg 1983: in double rook endings you try to establish your rooks on the seventh row, confining your opponent's king to the back row. Here Black (to play) had the ideal situation when the GMs adjourned overnight. But though Timman burnt the midnight oil and tried all kinds of formations, he couldn't find a win. Remarkably, there is one, just a few moves deep. Can you do better?

No 2448: 1 Qf2 Kxe5 2 Nf6 Kd6 3 Qc5. If Kd3 2 Ne7 Ke4 3 Qe2, or Kd5 2 Qe2 Kc6 3 Qxb5.

Quick crossword no. 342

Across

1 Young hopeful of a district (9,3)
9 Wall hanging (5)
10 Brave (7)
11 Nail, stitch, or course (4)
12 Marsupial (with court) (8)
14 Whole (6)
15 Sing like a bird (6)
18 16th century Indian chief (8)
20 Egyptian canal (4)
22 Instruction, maybe private (7)
23 Country bordering Congo (5)
24 Economic individualism (7,5)

Down

2 Yellow fruit (7)
3 Eject (from position of power) (4)
4 Display (6)
5 Former means of communication (8)
6 One of a flight (5)
7 Yellow oily toxic solvent (12)
8 Head waiter or steward (6,1,5)
13 Agreements (8)
16 Whale fat (7)
17 Printed cotton fabric (6)
19 Proof of absence (5)
21 City of the Taj Mahal (4)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

CAN YOU play bridge too well? I know it's not something you would ever accuse your partner of doing, but it's certainly possible. If you don't believe me, ask any of the Danish team, whose heart-breaking story was the highlight of the Rhodes Olympiad.

When the 96th and supposedly final deal of the match between Denmark and Indonesia was over, the Danish supporters in the packed Vugraph theatre gave a mighty roar and rushed to congratulate their heroes. The scoreboard showed that Denmark had won by the tiny margin of 5 IMPs, and had earned the right to meet France in the final for the gold medal. But there had been a scoring error! Both teams checked and re-checked the totals, but the result was always the same — a dead heat.

Danish despair was matched by Indonesian hope as the weary players returned for an extra eight deals. Seven of them had been played, and Denmark had eked out a lead of 9 IMPs before the final deal was placed on the table. And this time, there was no question of error — Denmark really did have the lead by that margin.

Indonesia required a swing of 10 IMPs on the last board, and such swings are rare in top-class play. All eyes were rivetted to the Vugraph screen, which showed these cards:

North
♠6
♥K 10 6 4
♦8 7
♣A Q J 10 6 5

West
♠A K 5 2
♥None
♦A K 6 5 4 3 2
♣K4

East
♠J 9 8 4 3
♥A 9 5 3
♦Q J
♣8 7

South
♠Q 10 7
♥Q J 8 7 2
♦10 9
♣9 3 2

The bidding in the Closed Room with Indonesia East-West was:

South	West	North	East
	P'wen		W'gas
	1♦	2♣	Double(1)
No	3♣(2)	No	3♠
No	4♠	No	No
No			

(1) A takeout double, with values in the major suits. (2) A cue bid, showing a powerful hand with support for one of the majors.

Panelewen as West rightly foresaw the danger of a club lead through his king at trick one, and Indonesia scored a safe 620. But in the other room, Dennis Koch and Jens Auken for Denmark bid like this:

South	West	North	East
Karwur	Auken	Sacul	Koch
	1♦	2♣	Double
No	3♣	No	3♦(1)
No	3♠	No	4♠
No	4NT(2)	No	5♦(3)
No	5♥(4)	No	6♠(5)
No	No	No	

(1) A very clever bid. Koch saw that if Auken had the king of clubs, it should be protected from the opening lead, so he temporised with three diamonds to allow Auken to bid a major suit first. (2) Blackwood with spades agreed as trumps. (3) One ace. (4) Asking for the queen of spades. (5) Considering that his extra card in spades was as good as the queen, Koch bid the slam.

Six spades by West was a good contract, and the Danes' auction was quite brilliant. But Sacul led ace and another club, Auken won the second round and laid down the two top spades, and Indonesia played in the Olympic final.

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Notes & Queries

Joseph Harker

***WHICH* countries do not have any McDonald's restaurants?**

AFGHANISTAN has yet to succumb to McDonaldism, though I can recommend the local equivalent, chapli kebabs folded in hot *nan*, as being far superior to anything McDonald's can offer. Nor have I seen an official McDonald's in Pakistan, though there are numerous copycat fast-food shops in Islamabad and Peshawar that sell excellent pizzas, spicy chicken and burgers. — *Jonathan Lee, Sheffield*

INDIA and Nepal do not have McDonald's because the Hindu faith prohibits the eating of cow produce. I doubt Libya has any. Iraq, Iran, North Korea and other anti-American states are probably McDonald's free too. — *Jamie Ferguson, London*

THERE are a large number of countries, especially in Africa and Asia, that don't have McDonald's restaurants: Angola, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Chad, Burundi, Mozambique and Nepal, to name a few. For further information, you can contact McDonald's at this internet site: http://www.mcdonalds.com/main — *Michael A Smolowitz, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

***DO RAINBOWS*, or similar phenomena, occur at night?**

YES. They occur every time we have a full (or near full) moon at the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. They appear in the spray above and around the water falls. The spray, in fact, falls with such intensity that it "rains" 24 hours a day. — *David Brown, Harare, Zimbabwe*

FOR those nocturnal walkers who inhabit the clear air of the northern dales, a pure white rainbow against a black sky is not an infrequent sight. For further confirmation, visit the Tate gallery in London and see Turner's painting of a night rainbow in the Lakes. — *Delphine Ruston, Richmond, Yorkshire*

Any answers?

"*A SLAP-UP MEAL*": what has "slap" got to do with it? — *Don Henderson, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire*

***ALL MOONS* in our solar system have names: Callisto, Io, Ganymede, etc. Why doesn't earth's moon have a name?** — *Tom Leland, New York*

***HAVE BOMBS* ever resembled the cannonball with a fuse seen in cartoons?** — *Gerard Mackay, Nesscliffe, Shropshire*

***SHOPPING* trolleys taken from supermarkets by customers litter the streets worldwide. Will anybody ever think of a way to solve this problem?** — *CJ De Jong, Eastbourne, East Sussex*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. Readers with access to the Internet can respond to Notes & Queries via http://go2.guardian.co.uk/nq/

French icon gets a makeover

Alex Duval Smith

AS EUROPE prepares to see out the millennium, the *fin de siècle* icon offered to French youth is a dead minister, pictured in monochrome on street corners and postage stamps.

The ashes of André Malraux, who died in 1976, were placed in the Panthéon memorial in Paris last weekend.

The author of La Condition Humaine and founder of the French culture ministry has been reinvented in a publicity campaign to rival most pop promotions. Parisian commuters on Métro platforms can watch Malraux's life story on television screens. Squares, streets and schools are to be named after him. Even the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, now has an André Malraux cultural centre.

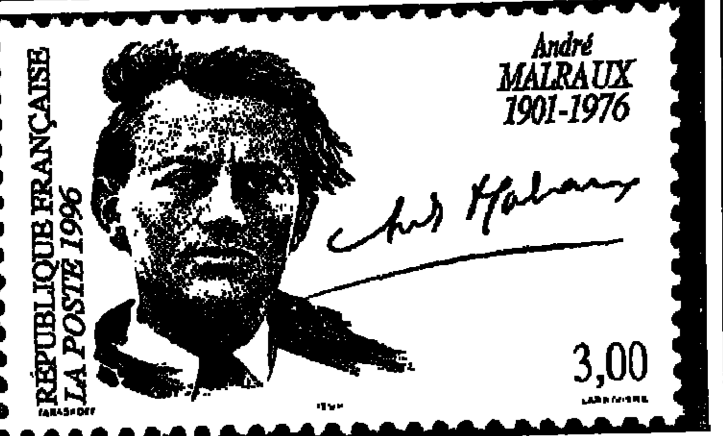
But then it was Malraux who, in 1959, convinced his friend General de Gaulle that wars would in future be won through the arts, and that "every child in France has as much right to paintings, theatre and cinema as to the alphabet".

Since every self-respecting French government needs an intellectual on its side, the current Gaullist president, Jacques Chirac, wants Malraux's friendship, too. But the heroin-addicted, philandering bisexual who was culture minister from 1959 to 1969 has not been easy to reinvent. The post office, eager to comply with — often flouted — laws against tobacco promotion, was unable to find a picture in which Malraux was not smoking. So it copied a 1935 Gisèle Freund photograph and removed the Gitane.

In the build-up to the Gaullist ceremony at the Pantheon — the 18th century former church where Léon Foucault tried out his pendulum — Malraux's life story has been edited beyond credulity. Among the flurry of "open letters to Malraux" published in the press, one by the rightwing novelist Jean-Edern Hallier described Malraux as a "staunch anti-socialist" who today would be "anti-Maastricht and pro-Serb".

Born in 1901, he was haunted by death — the suicides of his father and grandfather, the death of a lover and two of his own children. Some of his best writing was in funeral eulogies and in his biography of T E Lawrence.

After spending his youth in French Indochina, pillaging the temples of Angkor, he headed a republican air squadron in Spain even before the communists formed the International Brigades in August 1936. But he fell out with the Friends of the USSR, and didn't fight with the communist Resistance. Only in 1944 did he join De Gaulle's Alsace-Lorraine brigade.





André Malraux (right) as photographed in 1935 by Gisèle Freund and minus the Gitane, on a postage stamp

Letter from Bamako Robert Lacville

Welding a life

LIVING inside Africa brings the privilege of sharing other people's lives. My neighbour Samaké died last year. On his deathbed he took my hand: "*Je vous confie mes 17 enfants.*" Quite a privilege! It doesn't mean that Jeanne and I actually have to adopt all 17 children. Nor am I duty-bound to marry his two wives. But I am expected to help out: to share responsibility with his brother and his many friends and neighbours. For a start, I contributed 50kg of millet for the "sacrifice" meal and prayers commemorating the 40th day of the soul's departure. But my main duty is to visit.

At least once each week, I make a brief appearance in the Samaké family compound. I sit with the widows. The older sons come across to discuss school and exams. Sometimes I pay for school books. Rather pompously, I instruct the smaller boys to behave well and to show respect for their mothers.

African elders do not jiggle children on their knees; nor do we compromise our dignity by playing trains or football. We buy rubber balls to give pleasure, while remaining aloof and distinguished. I have a rule that the younger children must shake my hand. I actually insisted on this because I was afraid that I might be ignored! Having made the rule, I find myself faintly absurd as I stand in my embroidered African robes, surrounded by 10 grubby kids all under 12 years of age. Secretly I feel like a white waxwork dummy but I dare say I appear wonderful to them as they stare up at me, clamouring to shake my hand.

The eldest Samaké daughter, who is married, lives in Paris. She sends $200 contributions to the family several times each year. Maybe she and her husband scrub floors or sweep the platforms of the Metro. They are probably harassed daily by the police and live in fear of deportation. Her generosity in adversity makes my own efforts seem puny.

I give the occasional bag of rice or millet, a sheep for Tabaski (Id-el-Korban), a suitcase full of outgrown clothes from nephews in Europe. For more permanent impact, I decided to set up the eldest son as an artisan.

Six months before his father died, young Samake finished his three-year course at the Catholic Mission technical school. "I am a welder" he said. But no one is a welder, who does not weld. And to weld, you need equipment. I sent him off to collect a list of necessary equipment, prices and suppliers. A German welding unit costs nearly $1,000. The only alternative is a unit manufactured by the Malian Federation of Artisans (FNAM), which costs half the price of the German version, and there is an active export of Malian welding units to neighbouring countries. Naturally I chose "made-in-Mali". Young Samaké's list included welding rods, sheet metal cutters, a hammer, a leather apron . . . to my dismay he offered to do without the protective gloves and goggles if the total cost was too high. This set off my standard safety lecture: inwardly shuddering at memories of African welders wearing plastic sunglasses.

WE MADE a down-payment for the welding unit, and I sent young Samaké off with $15 to join the FNAM. That evening he was beaming with pride as he showed me his membership card. "Now I am a real welder."

Two weeks later we collected the shiny red welding unit and delivered it to the FNAM branch workshops. Here young Samaké can learn his trade and share in collective work. His first job was making benches for the new Bamako high school. He pays a monthly rent to FNAM for space and electricity. The workshops are full of young men hanging around with no equipment. We bought a metal trunk, padlocks and heavy chains to protect our investment.

A welder needs work. I ordered a metal grille for the kitchen window and gave young Samaké an advance to buy steel rods. The result was excellent. I gave money for paint and we admired his handiwork. But naturally young Samaké didn't want me to pay him for the labour. "You are my father." I bought an accounts book, and helped him work out how much he needs to earn each day on average. A kitchen window grille takes three days. I paid him $30, urging him to apply commercial rules instead of family values.

"Samake son, you have two pockets: one is for your business, the other is for the family. If your mother needs money, you will give her what is in the family pocket. But never give her money from the business pocket. That is not your money: it is the money of the welding business."

"I understand."

"And if your mother needs money for medicine, what can you do?"

"I give her money from the family pocket," said Samake.

"But what if the family pocket is empty?"

Young Samaké was silent. We both knew that it would be impossible for him, in practice, to refuse to buy his mother's medicine. Even if (as is very probable) the doctor has prescribed effervescent Vitamin C tablets imported from Switzerland, which are more expensive than a kilo of fresh oranges. Relentlessly I pursued my commercial argument against African logic.

"You cannot give her money from the business pocket, because that money does not belong to you, Samaké. It belongs to the welding unit." He agreed, relieved.

Samaké needed more work. Our ironing board fell over. He mended it nicely. We discovered that imported ironing-boards are expensive, so I asked Samaké to make me a new one. The finished product cost one-third of the imported version. So I ordered a second, which I gave to Old Brother's wife. Much against his will, I insisted on paying Samaké the commercial rate of $10 per day for his labour. We wrote it down carefully in his accounts book. When I found out that there had been no welding work for two weeks, I ordered two more ironing-boards. This year, I am giving ironing-boards for Christmas.

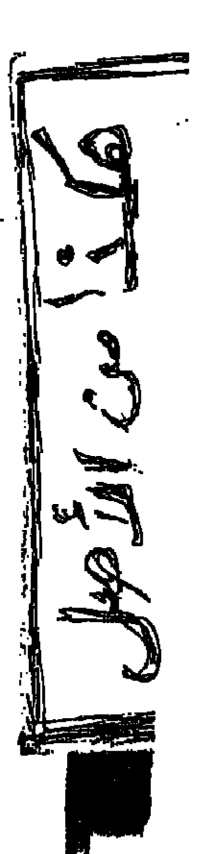
A Country Diary

Veronica Heath

NORTHUMBERLAND: The gales this autumn brought down a venerable oak tree, which fell across the lane to a local farm. The trunk had to be sawn and dragged aside and I was interested to see that in its rotted interior a hive of bees had once swarmed. Several old combs still hung perpendicular, fixed to the innards of the trunk. Bee combs consist of waxen cells constructed by the workers for storing honey and as cradles for the young. The deceased tree made me look afresh at others in our village, some of a prodigious height. There were several that lost rotted limbs in the storm.

A local beekeeper has brought me a lot of honey this year, in bar-frames so that I can fill my jars. Early collections were predominately from oil-seed rape fields and this honey cannot be kept beyond a month or two before becoming very waxy — when it becomes unsuitable for toast or scones I use it to spread on roasting meat. None is wasted in this kitchen.

Recently the door bell rang and there was my bee-man friend, this time with two bar-frames of heather honey. "I have had them on the moors at Hepple," he told me. They were delicious golden combs. When the beekeeper went up to collect his hives there was a small toad only 2 inches long sitting in front of one of them, nicely placed to catch any bee coming out. "It were very sleepy and the stomach full of my bees . . ." Did he kill it? No, he said, he hadn't the heart to do that and besides they chiefly only eat the old or diseased bees. It is not only toads that rob swarms but also hedgehogs. "Once my bees swarmed under, instead of inside the hive," my friend told me. "I saw a hedgehog wade straight into the swarm, sticking its head in the middle of a moving mass of bees and then backing out again, munching and swallowing. If I hadn't chased it off, the beastie would have had another go."



Looking for Mr Redgrave

THEATRE
Michael Billington

LYNN REDGRAVE'S one-woman show, widely seen in America, is the story of her life-long quest for her father's love.

Sir Michael Redgrave was, of course, a great actor. But what makes his daughter's account strangely moving, and applicable to non-theatrical families, is the sense that only as he neared death was she able to receive the affection she desperately craved.

She interweaves her story with copious extracts from Shakespeare; and the one that seems most painfully relevant is King Lear. Lynn Redgrave casts herself as one of nature's Cordelias: a shy tongue-tied youngest child who cannot heave her heart into her mouth and who even walks in fear of her aloof father.

But, as Sir Michael lies dying of Parkinson's disease, the barriers fall and the two of them are at last able to declare their love: a situation more common in British family life than we care to admit.

But, as well as being a hindsight saga, the show also gives Lynn Redgrave a chance to show off her versatility as a mimic. She gives us a fund of theatrical stories and pen-portraits of the famous. Here is Edith Evans swooping and darting rather nervously through Hay Fever, Maggie Smith with the nasal tones of Kenneth Williams and the sinuous curves of an Erte fashion-plate, and Dorothy Tutin breathily offering advice to the aspiring actress.

The danger is that it could easily descend into green room gossip: an inbred show for aficionados only. But what makes it something infinitely more touching is the sense of relived pain.

One gasps with astonishment at the emotional negligence of Sir Michael, who fails to record Lynn's birth in his meticulously kept diary, who treats her with a cool indifference during her childhood, and who walks out on her debut in a school play.

Yet there is nothing of condemnation in his daughter's account: only a desperate attempt to understand this difficult, diffident man.

She also evokes memories of his enthralling performances. He was the best of all Hamlets, a magnificent noble ruin of an Antony and, as Uncle Vanya, the perfect embodiment of Chekhovian waste. The paradox that remains is how he could be so emotionally candid on stage while being so masked and guarded in private. Not even Lynn Redgrave can quite solve that riddle. But her show evokes memories of a great actor unmatched at playing driven intellectuals and records her search for the elusive private man.

It will appeal to those who like theatrical home-chat and rehearsal room anecdotes. But, more seriously, it reminds us that the bane of British life is its emotional constipation and that the love that dare not speak its name is all too often that between parents and children.



Hanky panky . . . Harry Belafonte flaps the linen in Robert Altman's jazz-fest film, Kansas City

Thank you for the music

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

OF ALL American film-makers, Robert Altman is the biggest gambler. He gambles not just by the use of subject matter Hollywood wouldn't touch — at least not in the same irreverent way — but also in the very way he makes movies. He stitches them together from often disparate elements to create an entity that hopefully makes sense. And he doesn't tell his actors what to do with the lines; rather, they can do substantially what they like.

Sometimes he wins, and when he does, a masterwork like Nashville or Short Cuts results. Sometimes he loses, as he did with Prêt-à-Porter, where the fashion jungle became a jumble. **Kansas City** is midway between the two. This attempt to remember his corrupt, jazz-soaked hometown during the days of his youth in the thirties is like a series of riffs during which the theme tune gets lost even as we applaud the soloists.

The plot just about holds together. Jennifer Jason Leigh is a telegraph operator who kidnaps the drug-addicted wife (Miranda Richardson) of a leading presidential advisor (Michael Murphy) on the day of the mayoral elections. She does it to get her man (Dermot Mulroney) back. He's being held by Harry Belafonte's Seldom Seen, a black gangster whom he's unwisely tried to cross. The politician must use his influence, or else.

It is an orthodox thriller structure. Upon it, Altman constructs a kaleidoscopic panorama of a lawless city which, though it was full of racism, played host to some of the greatest jazzmen in the world.

Charlie Parker, Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins are each given cameos in the film, with the music played by today's best young musicians. If nothing else, the film is a joy to listen to. Its high spot is the cutting contest between Hawkins and Young at the Hey Hey Club, as Seldom Seen explains that he may be a crook but it's what whites deserve for being so greedy.

And the music isn't the film's only strength. It is also good to look at, with art direction, design and costumes providing an immaculate sense of period. The problem lies with the lead characters, and especially with Leigh's performance as the telegraph operator. In attempting to emulate Jean Harlow (whom the character adores), she forgets that charm was part of her armoury, as well as zing. Her portrait is acting pushed towards parody, and tipped over the edge.

Richardson's laudanum-soaked kidnap victim is another matter, as is Belafonte's Seldom Seen. But even they are curiously uninvolving figures in this landscape, where the sights and sounds of the city comfortably dominate the screenplay.

In the end, the film-making seems almost careless and often perfunctory, as if Altman's memories — a mixture of nostalgia and acerbic irony — aren't clear enough for the deal in hand: to tell it like it was, but in a way that will entertain us royally.

If the racism of the time is eloquently interpreted through Seldom Seen — a Marcus Garvey convert with a philosophic excuse for lining his own pockets — the realisation that captor and captive may have more in common than meets the eye seldom works as it should.

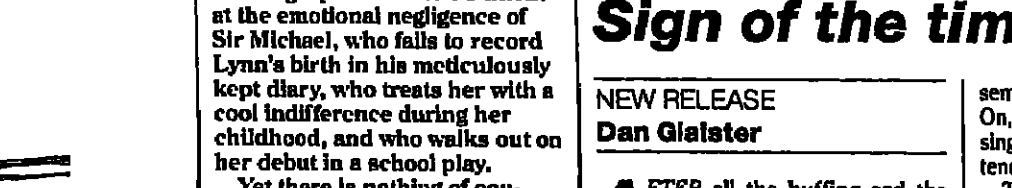
But if the heart of the package is disappointing, the wrapping is worth seeing. And, particularly, hearing. No one so in love with jazz as Altman could fail to transmit his enthusiasm to others. In this respect Kansas City is a success. The rest seems like a gamble that doesn't quite come off.

Iranian cinema, though beset by censorship problems, has risen again in recent years, thanks in large part to the West's espousal of the work of Abbas Kiarostami. It's unlikely to reach the heights of the sixties and early seventies under the present regime, but judging by Mohsen Makhmalbaf's **Gabbeh**, where there's life, there's hope.

This film, named after the central character and the carpet she weaves, is a poetic and fabulist love story set among the nomadic tribes of southeastern Iran, where a young woman pleads for her father's permission to marry. A horseman waits on the horizon for her. Meanwhile her ageing uncle, seeking a wife for himself, gives her moral support.

This wisp of a plot allows Makhmalbaf to both make a quiet, almost elliptical statement about the position of women in Iran and give us some ravishing shots of the terrain and the nomads' lifestyle. All this is supplemented by the idea that art and life are indivisible, and that reality and myth are nearer to each other than we suppose. On screen we see a mixture of both, and the story is illustrated on the carpet the girl weaves.

The film, an Iranian-French co-production, has been banned in Iran, though it is in no way a political statement like some of this director's other films. Visual poetry, it seems, is as suspect anything else.



Sign of the times

NEW RELEASE
Dan Glaister

AFTER all the huffing and the puffing, the sulking and the name changes, the artist whose name is now a registered trademark celebrated his freedom last week with a concert at his Paisley Park studios. Boyz II Men were there to listen to his set, so were Donatella Versace, and, er, Grateful Dead wannabes, Phish. The party food was Captain Crunch, the newly liberated one's favourite breakfast cereal.

For 30 minutes, the Artist played three tracks from Emancipation, his long-awaited triple album, as well as three by another chap called Prince. A live broadcast of the album launch was relayed to a record shop in London, where 100 fans gathered at 7am to watch on a video screen. From such devotion are careers formed.

The set was remarkable for its energy, musicianship and consummate professionalism. At 38, the former purple imp looked to be at the peak of his powers. Dancing through the new CD's opening track Jam Of The Year, wigging out to his own guitar solo on Purple Rain, or leading some inspired ensemble playing on Get Yo Groove On, also from the new set, it was a singular warning to would-be pretenders.

The timing of his performance was no accident. It marked the end of the Artist's contract with Warners, a relationship that had seen him through his early years but had grown increasingly acrimonious as he grew increasingly prolific.

Warners insisted that he shouldn't release more than one set per year, Prince — as he then was — delivering product as he created it. A race evolved to complete his contract, with the Artist delivering out-takes and studio jams to make up the numbers. From sales of 13 million for 1984's Purple Rain, the last album released by Warners, the forgettable Chaos And Disorder, sold fewer than 100,000.

And all the while there was talk of a masterpiece in the vaults, the record he really wanted to make but wasn't going to give to Warners, the one that would return him to his rightful place at the top.

Emancipation may be that record, or it may be something he knocked off over a long weekend. The Artist has spoken of the three-hour set as a cathartic recording: "I got everything out of my system with it. I let the music dictate what I want . . . maybe this is my Citizen Kane."

It is multi-styled, polished, fantastically produced, and superbly performed, but after two listens the only thing I could remember about the lyrics was the line on Joint 2 Joint: "You think you're my soulmate, you don't even know which cereal I like — Captain Crunch."

Joint 2 Joint is emblematic of the beauty and the frustrations associated with following the man's music. It moves smoothly from style to style: mellow soul, rap, funk. Although it fails to deliver in any of them, it does remind us that opera director Peter Sellars once compared the Artist to Mozart for his abundant creativity.

The new deal with EMI is unique in that the record company merely handles the distribution for the artist. He gets to keep the masters and dictate the release schedule. It is quite a coup. The man is like a small child let loose in the playpen of his dreams: "Sometimes I stand in awe of what I do myself," he said recently as he listened to the album. "I feel like a regular person but I listen to this and wonder, where did it come from?"

The CDs feel like three separate albums. The first features the jazz and gentle funk side of the Artist. The catchiest number is the single, a cover of the Stylistics' Betcha By Golly Wow. It is a fine, faithful tribute to a great song, the Artist scatting over the top of the original melody, adding layer upon layer.

CD two, the weakest of the three, gets all lovey-dovey, closing with a paean to the mother of his child, Friend, Lover, Sister, Mother/Wife. That comes just after Let's Have A Baby. Yuk. It has its funky moments, however. Emale is a soulful meditation on all things cyber, with the chorus "www.emale.com".

The third CD gets more interesting. Slave is a Housequake-style atmospheric stormer, New World sounds like a hi-energy Giorgio Moroder, Face Down is a rap that actually comes off. This is the Artist where he works best, in a club setting, getting off on the groove. There's another cover, a rich, soulful version of the Delfonics' La La La Means I Love You, a bit of hard funk, some disco, and a rocking version of Joan Osborne's One Of Us. The set winds down with an epic, synth-laden The Love We Make, before closing with the title track, a groover that sounds like Stevie Wonder with something naughty down his trousers.

It is a partial return to form. The good is very good, the worst is quite good. The best news is the final CD, which is reminiscent of some of the joys of his earlier music. As for the rest — edit and enjoy.

Marching to an off-beat drum

OPERA
Andrew Clements

IT HAS taken just over 30 years for Bernd Alois Zimmermann's only opera to make it on to the stage in London. At least three British companies, including Covent Garden, have contemplated productions over the past 10 years, only to get cold feet when they saw the balance sheet — with an orchestra of more than 100, a large cast, three film screens and three acting areas it is not a work to take lightly.

But English National Opera has boldly gone where no one else has dared: Die Soldaten opened at the London Coliseum last week, directed by David Freeman and conducted by Elgar Howarth.

In purely logistical terms the evening is a triumph: simply presenting the piece as coherently and musically precisely as ENO has managed is a huge achievement.

Based on Jakob Lenz's 18th century play, Die Soldaten tells the story of a hapless teenager, Marie, who thinks she can become upwardly mobile by marrying an officer in the local army garrison. To the soldiers, though, she is just a bit on the side: she is raped and ruined, and ends the opera as a street prostitute.

If the story is relatively simple, Zimmermann's treatment of it is anything but. Writing an opera for an avant-garde composer in the early 1960s was a dangerous business — most of his contemporaries dismissed the medium as old hat — and Zimmermann went out of his way to show that he could make the work conform to current ideas of complexity.

Hence the use of musical and dramatic multiplicity, of scenes happening simultaneously and collages of different styles — the kind of thing that is taken for granted nowadays in film and pop but which was quite new at that time.

The message of the piece is a sincere one, if slightly muddled and indulgent in its execution: when you train soldiers to act aggressively they will transfer that behaviour to their private lives: and it is society that bears the consequences.

Freeman's production rams that point home by using much more film footage than even Zimmermann prescribed, and by providing the action with a constant backdrop of squaddies marching and drilling for battle.

But he makes sure that the narrative thread is never obscured. And in the pit Howarth presents Zimmermann's teeming score as lucidly as one could ever hope; for all its atavistic outbursts, the music also contains many passages of chamber-like intimacy, in which what characterisation there is of the protagonists is allowed to emerge.

Most of the characters are little more than ciphers. Only Marie, sung here by Lisa Saffer with astonishing accuracy in some stratospheric soprano writing, gets fleshed out in any detail.

Die Soldaten may not be a masterpiece, but it is more than a period piece. Other composers later took up Zimmermann's ideas and did them better, but to get the chance to hear his first attempt is fascinating.

The Fo must go on

It takes more than a heart attack to slow down Italy's leading playwright, writes **Lyn Gardner**

IT IS sleeting hard and the temperature is below zero but Dario Fo wants to go for a walk. It is a year since the author of the political farces Can't Pay, Won't Pay and The Accidental Death Of An Anarchist suffered a heart attack. But there seems little sign of the eyesight and memory loss that forced him to cancel a world tour last year. Fo is vigorous, twinkly-eyed and still amazingly attractive for a man of 70 — and he knows it.

In Britain to collect an honorary doctorate from the University of Westminster, he is itching to see the Globe before flying back to his native Italy. Who knows, it may even stop sleeting for him. Fo seems used to getting what he wants.

When I mention that although he may be the most performed living playwright, the British seem to prefer their Ayckbourns and Godbers, he looks put out and starts citing the productions of his work in this country. He points out that the slogan Can't Pay, Won't Pay was taken up by the poll-tax protesters.

What he will concede is that British translators and directors have not always shown his work to its best advantage. Too often Fo's plays have been treated simply as gag-a-minute Whitehall farces.

The Accidental Death Of An Anarchist, based on the story of a railway worker who "accidentally" fell from the window of a Milan police station while under interrogation, had a particular pertinence in Britain when it was first performed in 1979. That was soon after the death of Blair Peach. The production eventually transferred to the West End, lost its political edge in the process, and before long even the cast were referring to it as The Incidental Death Of Analysis.

Similarly, Trumpets And Raspberries, with all references to the kidnapped and murdered Aldo Moro removed, merely became a West End vehicle for Griff Rhys Jones.

"People can do what they like to my texts, but I insist they do it with style," says Fo. "Some of these productions used the text as if it were a rag. When these plays are performed with no ideological commitment and no indignation against repression and arrogance, there is a gap — and they tend to fill it with banal vulgarity."

He shrugs: "The question for any theatre practitioner is, why do you do theatre? What drives you on? What do you want to say?"

For Fo, the son of a stationmaster, brought up 80km from Milan, what he wants to say has never been in doubt. "Culturally I have always been part of the proletariat. I lived side by side with the sons of glass-blowers, fishermen and smugglers. The stories they told were sharp satires about the hypocrisy of authority and the middle classes. I was born politicised."

Yet it is the paradox of Fo, and also part of his success, that though he could be loathed by the establishment (on one occasion he was arrested and imprisoned as a subversive) and condemned by the church (the Vatican described Mistero Buffo as "the most sacrilegious performance ever broadcast since the invention of the television"), he also became wildly popular with middle-class theatre-goers.

It would be a pity, though, if a distrust of champagne socialists were to turn us away from Fo. Despite his health problems, he shows no sign of slowing down; and Britain is finally beginning to recognise his influence on its native practitioners. Jacques Lecoq is often said to have shaped young British performers and directors, but Fo has also helped form the work of innovative companies such as Theatre de Complicité and directors such as Neil Bartlett.

But how does one make sense of a career that has seen Fo condemned as a subversive, then proposed as a worthy recipient of the Nobel prize, as he has moved from bourgeois to radical theatre and back again?

"That is simple," Fo replies. "There was once an Austrian paediatrician who said: 'Give me the first five years of a child's life, because everything that comes afterwards is repetition.' It is the same with playwrights. After the first five plays you have said everything; you just keep on saying it differently."



Dario Fo is the most performed living playwright in the world, but not shown to his best advantage in Britain PHOTO: DOUGLAS H JEFFERY

Fergie's red, red whine

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

THE Duchess of York scooped up photographs of the Queen ("I love her to bits") and rushed them out of the room or turned them face down before the camera caught them. "I've got pictures of the Queen in my house," remarked Ruby Wax, acting miffed. And don't we all? Some first-class. Some second.

Ruby Wax Meets The Duchess Of York (BBC1) was a wide-ranging interview. It moved from the kitchen of Romenda Lodge ("Can you make me a cup of tea? You've got to make the tea *and* talk to me") to the conservatory where the duchess's dalmatian ate Ruby's bagel ("Oh my Gard! You see why you get into trouble. Even your animals have no control") to the living room ("This is the Dynasty suite") to the bedroom (where a cushion claimed "Anyone can be a Mother. It takes someone special to be a Mummy"). Then into the car to collect Beatrice and Eugenie from school.

Daisy Ashford would describe the Romenda Lodge as a sumpshous spot. Cushions, chintz, clutter, chestnuts roasting by an open fire. Was that a *stuffed cat* on the back of the sofa? In the garden a Venus clutched a last wisp of decency to her.

Ruby is instantly intimate. So is the duchess, who called her Ruby constantly in the American manner. They both speak fluent psychobabble, they both make TV commercials, they seemed to get along very well.

The duchess wore a purple skirt with scarlet hair. Ruby a scarlet jacket with a burgundy rinse. You felt your eyes water.

So did the duchess. "I read Hello! magazine with my own story in it and I cried twice because it's all so tragically sad."

It all started to go wrong when she was 16 and took slimming pills while in South America. "What I realise now is suddenly I've got changed into another person. Right? Because the slimming drug, I didn't know what it was. I think this is what we call toxins and I think that stayed in my system. In the last year I've certainly cleaned out my system."

Ruby firmly declined the offer of a Dyno-Rod drink made from raw asparagus, celery, spinach and watercress. "I go to the toilet enough. I think it should stop for a while before it goes through." The loo was the one room we didn't visit but it was a close call.

She was at Balmoral the day she was shown, as she put it, being kissed by a bald-headed chap. "I went into lunch and the only way I got in was asking for guidance from the Lord. I said 'OK. I'm sorry' and I remember thinking to myself 'Well, I've got the Lord with me. I must go forward.'"

"Did they," asked Ruby, lowering the tone with a bump, "say anything smirky?" "No, they were all completely and utterly fantastic with grace and dignity."

You felt as if you were in a lift. Every time Ruby took it down to the bargain basement, the duchess took it up again to the ladies' powder room.

By Christmas she was banished to the gatehouse. The children said: "Mummy, why are you not good enough to go up there?" And she said: "Mummy's made some mistakes but hasn't everybody? Granny wants me up there but perhaps the other members of the family don't." (This is believed to be a reference to Grandpa.)

WHAT we seem to have here is a floppy, friendly red setter, which has made a couple of messes on the carpet, and can't understand why it has been bundled out into the garden. At such moments the duchess repeats St Francis of Assisi's prayer: "Seek to understand, not to be understood. Seek to love, not to be loved. And I seek to all that sort of stuff . . ."

Like her more famous sister-in-law, Princess Diana, she feels conspired against. "The amount of abuse and abhorrent lies that have been in the papers, there has to be somebody egging it on. I've spoken to a few editors in the past who've said, 'I don't know why but I go to a drinks party and suddenly some people come up to me and tell me where you're going to be, what you're doing, and all the bad things you do.

Therefore, in my position, I've got to write it. But it's funny. Why do they come up and tell me these things?' These editors, they're sitting there minding their own business and people talk about what I'm up to and these editors used to say to me, 'It's so weird.'"

I'm not sure that the image of those editors sitting there minding their own business isn't the one I shall treasure most. At which point Ruby thanked her warmly for coming, kissed her and pushed her out of her own house. Leaving her on the outside, looking in.

House trained

David McKie

The Literary Companion to Parliament
by Christopher Silvester
Sinclair-Stevenson 619pp £30

The Oxford Dictionary of Political Quotations
ed Antony Jay
Oxford 515pp £15.99

Brewer's Politics revised edition
by Nicholas Comfort
Cassell 693pp £12.99

DID you know that Palmerston spent 13 years in the Commons before he made his first speech? That the great historian Gibbon sat there for eight whole sessions and never uttered a word? That the essayist Addison rose, stood silent in his place, and after a while sat down — in time becoming a minister without ever having spoken in the House? Neither did I. But that is because the publishing industry had up to now inexplicably failed to produce a book like Christopher Silvester's.

Did you know that Sir Herbert Watkin Williams-Wynn, having won a seat in a by-election, voted in just one division, which brought down the government, precipitating a general election which cost him his seat? That Joseph Chamberlain was elected unopposed at two elections although he was by then too ill to attend the House? Probably not. But then the unexpected lurks in Silvester's erudite preface and 600 resonant pages.

He mingles the grave with the gay. Here in the first of his 18 sections — Arrivals and Departures — is Ernest Bevin, entering the chamber as Churchill is speaking. Churchill falls silent: he has seen the look of death in the Foreign Secretary's face. In a section called Great and Terrible Occasions, Cromwell dissolves the Rump Parliament, Home Rule fails, Neville Chamberlain announces the outbreak of war. Here are the triumphant maiden speeches like Harold Nicolson's — the best, friends assure him, they have ever heard — and disastrous ones, like Disraeli's (nothing wrong with the speech, he complains to his sister: the Rads and Reformers shouted me down).

There are plenty of jokes that aren't the slightest bit funny, but which still deserve their place because they evoke as little else can the cosiness, the clubbiness of the Commons, where something that leaves non-participants cold can convulse insiders. "Everyone shouts with laughter over jokes and allusions which are unintelligible to anyone not an MP," an affronted George Orwell warned readers of the Partisan Review for spring 1944. "Nicknames are used freely, violent political opponents pal up over drinks. Maxton, the ILP [Independent Labour Party] MP, 20 years ago an inflammatory orator whom the ruling classes hated like poison, is now the pet of the House, and Gallacher, the Communist MP, is going down the same road . . ."

"In one sense", wrote Nye Bevan eight years later in his book In Place of Fear, "the Commons is the most unrepresentative of representative assemblies. It is an elaborate conspiracy to prevent the real clash of opinion which exists outside from finding an appropriate echo within its walls. It is a social shock absorber placed between privilege and the pressure of popular discontent."

And then there's the drink. One of the great Westminster perils, says Nick Comfort in his big and richly tasty Brewer's Politics, now reissued in a revised edition, is the use of alcohol as a comforter by those who endure long sittings and are far from home. Yet to say an MP is drunk is contempt of the House. Silvester's book has Churchill describing to his wife how Asquith, as PM, was drunk in the House ("only the persistent freemasonry of the Commons prevents a scandal").

I could have done with more 20th century and a bit less 19th. But perhaps that reflects the sense that Parliament no longer means what it did: once the sounding-board of a mighty empire, it no longer feels like the sounding-board of anything much. "No other audience in the world," wrote Leo Amery eight years after the second world war, "has such power to influence the mainsprings of action." The statement was doubtful then: no one would make it today.

Silvester's Bevan and Orwell extracts might be useful additions to The Oxford Dictionary Of Political Quotations, marshalled with wit and meticulous attribution of sources by Antony Jay, who gave us Yes Minister. This too is a treat needing months to explore, with 12 pages of Shakespeare, lashings of Lord Macaulay, and the texts of those lines from Churchill, Thatcher, Callaghan, Healey, Tebbit and others that people don't always get right.

Do you know the origin of the slogan "Vote early, vote often?" No, I didn't know either. But Jay does.



Skip back in time . . . play and pluck in Britain during the second world war

Some hope but little glory

Jan Morris

Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-1990
by Peter Clarke
Allen Lane/The Penguin Press
454pp £25

THIS altogether admirable book, one of the first volumes in the new Penguin History Of Britain, records a hiatus in the national experience of the British: between the terrific enterprise of Empire in the 19th century and the hardly less exciting entry into a confederal Europe which is going to happen in the 21st. The British have been at their happiest in interesting times, and I have no doubt that just as dominion over palm and pine fired them in the last century, so their partnership in the governance of all Europe can exhilarate and rejuvenate them in the next.

Professor Clarke, though, is recording the century between, and for the most part it did not offer interesting times. His title pitches it high: Britain's glories, between 1900 and 1990, were decidedly transient, and Britain's hopes all too often faltered. It is part of a spectacular surge of British historiography inspired by the approach of the millennium, but unlike some of its peers it is not in the least gimmicky or computerish. It is a straightforward narrative history, highly professional, scrupulously balanced and somehow plucky. Clarke is neither ashamed to admire, nor reluctant to asperse.

Not that he is a mere traditionalist. The book, a Welsh reviewer must gratefully note, is part of a history of Britain, not of England (although unfortunately the very first thing my eye fell upon, in the frontispiece map, was Caernarfon spelt the English way, so long discredited that even the Ordnance Survey has given it up). Women, architecture, sport, popular culture, art and literature, all get the proper space so often denied them by chroniclers of an older school.

But it is for his gameness and pluckiness that I most admire Peter Clarke. It cannot have been easy to maintain his verve while writing 400-odd pages about 20th century Britain. He quotes Kipling's description of the country as "an island nine by seven", and that is the difficulty. The subject has become too small for grandeur, too big for intimacy. Gradually, during these years, the British people retreated into introspection. They came to suffer, in Churchill's phrase, "a disease of the will".

It was a drab century for the British. Its moments of splendour were moments of sadness too: even its one epic victory proved illusory. How many political leaders had the power of charisma? Churchill of course, who alone was able to send a shiver down the British spine; Lloyd George, who was Welsh; Nye Bevan, who was Welsh too; Oswald Mosley the Fascist; Ernest Bevin; Enoch Powell; Douglas-Home for the allure of decency; Margaret Thatcher for chutzpah. For the rest it was in general a long run of men without a song between them.

It was a century of specious promises and false starts. The Great War was the war to end wars. Britain was to be a nation fit for heroes. "You may be sure", Edward VIII told the unemployed in 1936, "that all I can do for you I will." Care from cradle to the grave is what Beveridge assured the people in 1942. Proportional representation, peace in Ireland, reform of the Lords, Scottish and Welsh devolution — all proposed, none achieved. The monarchy was still the monarchy. Nobody succeeded in breaking the dreary recital of confrontational politics, droning on, year after year, decade after decade, practised by dull and sometimes distasteful men in the monotonous delusion that the British system was necessarily and permanently Best.

And abroad? Insularity, once the strength of Britishness, now proved its enfeeblement. The British rid themselves with grace of their imperial possessions and duties, and won two world wars with courage, resilience and helpful allies. But in the later decades of the century they floundered through the world's affairs, increasingly uninterested in matters outside their own islands.

The role is there awaiting them, though, and surely it cannot be long before they awaken from their isolated sloth and timidity and respond to the adventure of Europe. Perhaps this is the Hope of Professor Clarke's title — certainly he ends his never disheartened book with the thought that the issue of Britain's relationship with the European Union "can hardly remain unresolved into the 21st century". I hope what he means is that unless the British people realise the splendour of the European idea, and react to it generously, hopefully and with their famous old bravery, British history in the 21st century will be as generally dreary as it has been in the 20th.

If you would like a copy of Hope and Glory at the special discount price of £20, see Books@Guardian Weekly (opposite)

Awful truths lie hidden in the thrills

Sean O'Brien

The Psalm Killer
by Chris Petit
Macmillan 535pp £16.99

AMONG **his other activities the film-maker Chris Petit has been for some time the severest reviewer of thrillers in town — formerly for the Times and latterly on these pages. Petit has made it clear that he expects the thriller to do its job: to intrigue and alarm, and also to deal with serious matters in the guise of entertainment.**

The Psalm Killer is an example of the genre near its best, Gorky Park with something to spare. Petit has fused the themes of conspiracy and cock-up and applied them to the context of Northern Ireland. Many of the sectarian horrors and political scandals of the last quarter of a century find their way into the book in one guise or another — the Shankill Butchers, the Kincora Boy's Home, the British shoot-to-kill policy, the violent dissension within the Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries. If he hasn't already read it, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland might find this book of some interest.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board might be less than grateful to the author however. For Petit, the Six Counties are the nightmare ground where the backs of the British and Irish minds leak into each other. The Psalm Killer is the monstrous offspring of the warring traditions. He is a serial murderer, but one whose seemingly indiscriminate cross-sectarian activities threaten to defeat even the wit of those accustomed to the complex political and religious manners of the conflict in Northern Ireland. As Petit conducts us through the half-world of barmy cults and cryptic annunciations in the personal columns of the Belfast Telegraph, it becomes apparent that he has provided the grimmest examination of national dirty linen since Gordon Burn's Alma Cogan.

Petit's detective, burdened with the name Cross, straddles both traditions and belongs to neither, being an English-born Catholic married into the Unionist upper middle class, and married, moreover, to a wife who is in the process of ditching him while he himself embarks on a perilous affair with a colleague. At once outcast and imprisoned, Cross is a grimly detached witness to the manners and methods of both sides, an honest copper made to learn that in the end no one is allowed to remain apolitical.

Petit offsets the potential melodrama with the sobriety of his prose, giving a convincing account of the day-to-day tedium of meticulous police work.

The Psalm Killer is the thriller as "straight" mystery story as well as psychopathology, and to summarise the plot in any detail would be unfair. It also makes it clear that Britain has a case to answer in Northern Ireland. This is hardly a politically fashionable notion in London, perhaps least of all in the newly ecumenical Labour party, but it makes more sense than the current state of imaginary negotiations about an Irish problem which — whisper who dares — has been British all along.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

The Redress of Poetry, by Seamus Heaney (Faber, £8.99)

WHEN someone about to be a Nobel Laureate lectures on poetry, it is a good idea to turn up, and this book is a boon for those who were not at Oxford between 1989 and 1994, when Heaney, Professor of Poetry at that time, delivered its contents. His scope is gently eclectic, accessible: Marlowe, Yeats, Frost, Stevens, Larkin, Dylan Thomas, Clare, etc. One can trace — and he acknowledges — a fond reassessment of many of the poets who moved him when he was young, and whom he might feel a tad edgy about loving now.

Native Speaker, by Chang-rae Lee (Granta, £6.99)

A KOREAN-AMERICAN spy, Henry Park, is asked to go undercover and see if he can dig any dirt on a messianic grass-roots politician who is beginning to spook certain powers-that-be; and becomes too emotionally involved for anyone's good. Very little detection actually goes on: it's more about love and loss than cloaks and daggers. As in a Saul Bellow novel, only about three things happen (or a thousand, depending on how you look at it). And, like a Bellow novel, it is also very, very good.

Generation X, by Douglas Coupland (Abacus, £6.99)

REISSUED in a shocking pink neon jacket, but now conventionally book-shaped; part of what made the first edition so different was its square format, the deliberate, complicit sense you felt that you were not just reading a book but making a fashion statement as well. Still, Coupland's rootless, affectless, yet charming prose (and great chapter headings: "Dead at 30/Buried at 70") stands up well.

W9 and Other Lives: Stories, by Carlo Gébler (Lagan Press, £5.95)

WHAT is it about the short story that lends itself so much to examining wasted lives, loss and emptiness? But I do not want to make Gébler's stories seem gloomier than they are, for he has an almost Chekhovian gift for internal detail, meaty introspection, and dramatic poise. Not to mention grim humour. Brilliant. (Lagan Press: P O Box 110, BT12 4AB, Belfast.)

The Best Ever Notes and Queries, ed Joseph Harker (Fourth Estate, £8.99)

THERE are some questions that do not get asked, such as "Do mice really like cheese?" or "Are humans the only animal species to have pudding?" Er, hang on, that *is* in this book. Anyway, you don't need me to tell you what's in it: you wrote it, you beautifully intelligent and well-informed readership, you. The best toilet book ever published.

Mother's ruin in white-trash heaven

Dominique Baldy

My Dark Places
by James Ellroy
Century 351pp £16.99

THERE is a photograph reproduced in My Dark Places of a 10-year-old boy. There is nothing out of the ordinary about him: slightly rotund, hair neatly parted, facing the camera.

The picture is of James Ellroy in 1958, and was taken moments after he had learnt that his mother had just been found murdered. The detectives who broke the news to him considered his reaction ambiguous, but there was a subtext with which they were unfamiliar. Ellroy's parents had been divorced four years earlier, and the boy's emotions were the stage on which the couple's mutual loathing had been played out.

"I caught both sides of that hatred," Ellroy recalls. "My mother portrayed my father as weak, slovenly, lazy, fanciful and duplicitous in small ways. My father had my mother categorised more concisely: she was a lush and a whore." The young Ellroy sided with his father, a drifter who believed fatherhood consisted of allowing the boy to share his porn magazines. Thus the first thought of the boy in the photo was that "some unknown killer just bought me a brand-new beautiful life".

Ellroy's first non-fictional work is an extended letter of apology to the mother he judged prematurely. As well as detailing the initial murder investigation (the crime was never solved), it charts his subsequent decline into a downward spiral of alcoholism, drug abuse and petty crime, before he found salvation in his writing. It closes with Ellroy's own recent re-investigation into the murder, in a bid to find the killer.

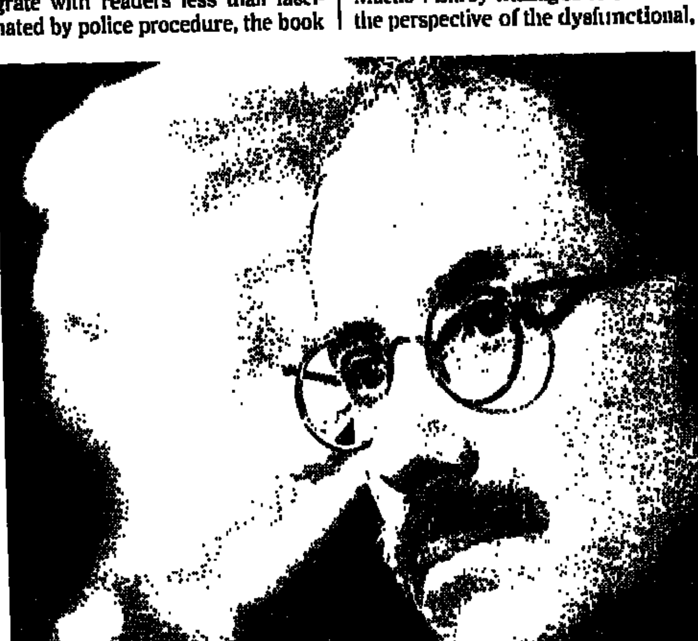
While Part One may occasionally grate with readers less than fascinated by police procedure, the book comes into its own in Part Two when Ellroy leaves the investigation behind and gets to work describing life in the rough-and-ready "white-trash heaven" town of El Monte.

Ellroy is clearly in his element as he sets about dissecting the body politic of the American Dream as lived by his parents, "a great-looking cheap couple, along the lines of Robert Mitchum and Jane Russell in Macao". Ellroy manages to recreate the perspective of the dysfunctional, lonely child caught in the crossfire, but his sardonic eye breathes life into his subjects and ensures their humanity is never lost. Geneva Hilliker Ellroy was respected as a conscientious mother and dedicated industrial nurse. She sought relief in alcohol and sexual encounters with strangers while James dwelt with his father at weekends.

It was probably one of these random meetings that led to her brutal death, and provided further fuel for the bile that the father sought to inculcate in his son, as well as feeding the author's dangerously ambivalent view of his mother: "The redhead was 15 years dead and somewhere far away. She ambushed me in the summer of 1973 . . . I was in the tub. I was jacking off to a cavalcade of older women's faces. I saw my mother naked, fought the image and lost." His detailing of the delirium and the driven sexual obsessions brought about by his alcohol and drug abuse, and the alienation from society he suffered as a result of his deliberately provocative far-right political posturing, is described dispassionately and lucidly, without a hint of any self-pity.

Ellroy is able to kick his bad habits in time to save himself. His mother never had the chance to do the same. "A cheap Saturday night took you down," he addresses her in the prologue. "You died stupidly and harshly and without the means to hold your own life dear."

Ellroy had those means, and this honest account of his painful journey of discovery is largely successful in its aim of giving her life lasting value.



Mummy, I hardly knew you . . . James Ellroy PHOTO: RICHARD RAYNER

Scent of pastiche

Michael Hofmann

Three Stories and a Reflection
by Patrick Süskind
Bloomsbury 89pp £10.99

UMBERTO ECO was probably the first, but in his wake there came Peter Høeg, Jostein Gaarder, Viktor Erofeyev, maybe Cees Noteboom and others; writers who were enormously successful all over Europe, and whose success, for once, did not stop at Ostend. Whereas the previous generation of continental imports — Grass, Calvino, Kundera — had been formally innovative and politically engaged, faintly intimidating figures with heavyweight reputations, these new writers were less troubling and less ambitious. They were hand-tailored oddities, pursuing essentially innocent research into history or more recondite areas of non-fiction, from which they fashioned their more accessible works. Where their predecessors had had prestige, they enjoyed popularity; they were novelties as much as novelists, and Patrick Süskind belongs squarely in their company.

He was born in 1949 in Ambach, one of the lakeside towns south of Munich. He studied history in Munich and Aix, and, for 10 years afterwards, wrote, in his own words, "long scripts and short prose". Then, in 1984, his one-man play, Der Kontrabaß (The Double Bass), shot him to fame; for a time it was everywhere, you could have travelled the length and breadth of Germany and seen it wherever you went. For me it is his most satisfactory work. In 1985, he published Das Parfum (Perfume), which was in the bestseller lists of Der Spiegel for nine years. In 1986, a television series he co-wrote, by the name of Kir Royale, went out on German television. Since then he has written a number of short prose tales. As literary careers go, his is one of stunning effectiveness and economy.

In England, the perception of him is slightly different. Because Perfume, his one novel so far, was his first English publication back in 1986, everything else has just tumbled after in a slightly disappointing fashion. The Double Bass is out of print and rarely performed; the shorter works are not received with the sort of delirious acclaim in Britain, where there is no tradition of the novella, that greets them in the original, and it remains sadly difficult to publish books of 80 to 120 pages; and Süskind's work for television is unknown in this country. Therefore, from a British point of view, he can't seem other than a one-book author.

There is another aspect of Süskind, a personal one this time, that also hasn't travelled and therefore doesn't count for anything in Britain. In Germany he is paradoxically famous for his private, retiring nature, avoiding publicity, interviews, photographs, all the usual media Tamtam of our age. It is oddly effective as a strategy. Süskind suffered a sort of calamity when a German weekly magazine (which he had written for) set a team of reporters and photographers on him, trailed him to a little hideaway where he used to work, and then published the results.

All Süskind's stories are essentially about ill-adapted loners who want nothing more than to be left in peace, so one can imagine the trauma this caused him. It seems possible to me that his prose tale The Pigeon, in which one such character is completely freaked out by the appearance of a pigeon outside his little room, might be a fictionalised treatment of this incident. Still, in England, where one doesn't necessarily expect to be confronted by foreign writers in the flesh and where the press are so much more carnivorous anyway, all this doesn't really impinge, and Süskind can't seem any more reclusive or mysterious than any other absentee author.

I can't see that Süskind's new book will do anything to change the way he is perceived in Britain. It is very evidently a stopgap, intended to keep his name before the public in the absence of a new novel. Originally written between 10 and 20 years ago, it can be read in an hour or two. Of the three stories, one is a soporific effort about an artist who is destroyed by a critic's idle declaration that her work lacks depth. The second is a psychologically acute piece on a chess match, where the local champ is challenged by a flashy and stylish looking young stranger, who by his mere manner and presence wins everyone's sympathies and has the champ rattled.

THE THIRD might be a forerunner or offshoot of Perfume: an 18th century perfume-maker murders young women for their scent, and ends up being torn limb from limb when he wears it. "Maître Mussard's Bequest" is set in the same 18th century, same France, with similarly obsessive physical investigations. A retired jeweller of a rather intellectual cast becomes persuaded that the world is being taken over by shells. Like Perfume, it is basically hokum: an unstable idea elaborated with a certain amount of inconsistency.

In these early pieces, as in all his later work, Süskind's subjects are imperilled individuals conducting delicate negotiations with a rather overwhelming and unpalatable world. Grenouille in Perfume, the most monstrous and destructive of them, does it through his nose: the poor bassist through his sub-musical instrument, "a nasty surprise in the sound department"; Herr Sommer, the claustrophobe, with his enormous strides; Jonathan Noel, the bank security-guard in The Pigeon, by standing still. In Three Stories the vulnerability and deficits of the characters are expressed by the literally deadly word "depth"; by doubled pawns and poor positions; by a geological parody of the jeweller's art; by the blank expression of a row of books.

There is real anguish and neurosis in Süskind's outlook, though this is carefully muted by his pedantic, rococo style and a deliberate paltriness in his choice of dramatic incident: Herr Sommer turns on a piece of snot on a piano keyboard, The Pigeon on a man's horror of running into anybody outside his shared toilet. This calibration has to do duty both as seriousness and as humour without, naturally, being convincing as either. It leads to a lack of meaning and a denial of purpose in Süskind's writing. In style, too, there is a similar lack of fixity and commitment: Süskind is a pasticheur, using stylistic features from three centuries. But Voltaire or Gogol or Chekhov would knock him into the cocked hat that is his real element.

Rugby Union International: England 54 Italy 21

Power pack shocks Italy

Robert Armstrong at Twickenham

ENGLAND's seven-try victory over Italy served as the ideal warm-up for the serious business of taking on the New Zealand Barbarians here on Saturday.

An awesome performance by the pack, which contained four of the seven new caps and plundered four tries, and a stunning debut by the scrum-half Andy Gomarsall, who scored twice, signposted the way England may be planning to meet the Kiwi challenge.

Given the presence of so many newcomers, it was the best possible start to the season's seven-match international programme. England did go off the boil after an hour's play — something they must not do against the New Zealanders — but by then glorious passages of explosive football had built a 42-7 lead, and even though the Italians scored three tries the hosts finished firmly in command.

England's captain Phil de Glanville, who acted as a tireless fetcher and carrier for his free-ranging forwards, pointed out that their next opponents, the All Blacks in all but name, will not allow the same freedom as the Italians, who saw the game slip away inexorably within half an hour. Nevertheless Jack Rowell will be greatly encouraged by the dynamic rugby his youthful side produced on their first outing together.

"New Zealand play rhythmic, controlled, patterned rugby which is beyond everyone else; they have all the pieces on the chess-board," warned the England coach. "Still, let's see what the English bulldog can do. We have made several changes, investments for the future, and today we proved we have excellent running forwards who will give us an edge when we play the big teams."

England's No 8 Chris Sheasby, operating cheek by jowl with his Wasps team-mates Dallaglio and Gomarsall, launched his Test career with a hard, athletic display of driving through the midfield that set the tempo for the afternoon.

Like Sheasby, Rodber, Johnson and Regan combined to outpower the Italians with sustained authority, and when the front-row replacements Hardwick and Greening came on to win their first caps they added strength and bite to the forward effort.

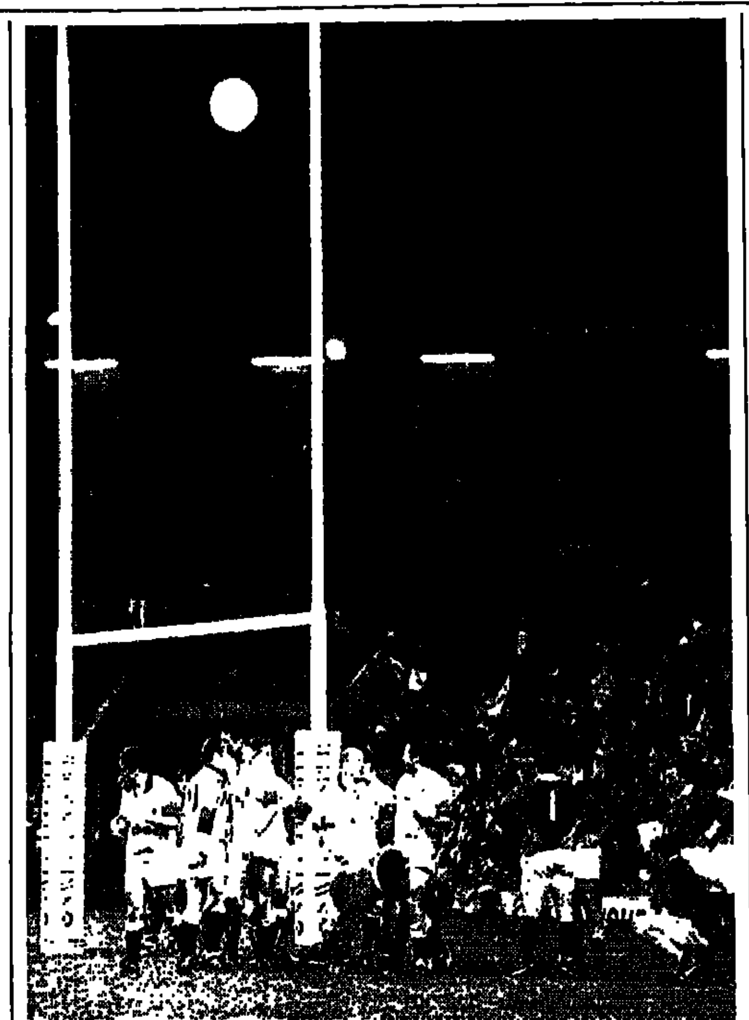
Italy found it impossible to contain the English juggernaut because they could not win any line-out ball, and their loose forwards, who were effective only for a 10-minute period in the final quarter, lacked muscle. The Italy captain Massimo Giovanelli said: "I'm proud of my team; in the second half they were lionhearted, and with that mentality we will get to the top level."

England's full potential will only emerge in the new year when they play France and next summer when they visit Australia. "We had a lot of control that was good variety," said de Glanville, "and the whole effort was a very good foundation for what we're trying to achieve. All the new caps had a superb game; you have to contribute to the team on the pitch and that's exactly what they did."

At Lansdowne Road, Irish rugby saw its professionals give a performance of worth although the fine display was not reflected in the final score, the home side going down to Australia 22-12, *writes Ian Malin*.

Murray Kidd, the Ireland coach, acknowledged: "The first 60 minutes were the best I've seen from our forwards but when you get that close you want to see a result."

For that hour Ireland harried the Wallabies with a passionate display, and with five minutes to go the score was 15-12 to the touring side. Then Gregan fed Knox for the half-back to run in the game's only try and leave the Irish to reflect on what might have been.



Seventh heaven . . . England celebrate another try against Italy at Twickenham in the light of a full moon PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Cricket

Doull delight in victory for New Zealand

NEW ZEALAND outplayed Pakistan to win the first Test in Lahore on Sunday by 44 runs with a day to spare and take a 1-0 lead in the two-match series.

The victory 25 minutes after tea on the fourth day was New Zealand's first in Pakistan since the 1968-69 tour when Graham Dowling's side won by five wickets at the same Gaddafi Stadium.

Pakistan, chasing a victory target of 276, fought well and took the game into the final session after resuming their second innings on 46 for five. They were eventually bowled out for 231, with the debutant middle-order batsman Mohammad Wasim unbeaten on 109. The 19-year-old batted with admirable composure to become the fourth Pakistani after Khalid Ibadullah, Javed Miandad and Salim Malik to score a century in his maiden Test.

The New Zealand paceman Simon Doull claimed three for 39 for a match haul of eight for 85 and the Man of the Match award.

Pakistan missed the injured Wasim Akram and will again be without their captain for the final Test starting in Rawalpindi on November 28.

New Zealand 155 (Younis 4-48, Mushtaq Ahmed 4-59) and 311 (S Fleming 92no, C Cairns 93).
Pakistan 191 (Moin Khan 59; Vaughan 4-27) and 231 (Mohammad Wasim 109no; Patel 4-36).
New Zealand won by 44 runs

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Beaten but unbowed

MANCHESTER United's Euro misery continued when they slumped to another defeat in the Champions League, beaten 1-0 by Juventus. It was United's second defeat at Old Trafford to foreign opponents in the space of three weeks.

To compound their agony, the Reds then saw the Turkish club Fenerbahce, who earlier shattered the English champions' 40-year unbeaten home record, leapfrog them in Group C after defeating Rapid Vienna 1-0.

United fell behind 10 minutes from half-time when Nicky Butt fouled Alessandro Del Piero inside the 18-yard box. The Italian blasted the resulting penalty past Peter Schmeichel. Although United pressed the cup holders back during the second half, Juventus survived the pressure.

Alex Ferguson's men are on the ropes now but not without hope of making the quarter-finals. If Juventus beat Fenerbahce, whom they have already defeated once, United will need only a draw in Vienna to see them through. They would be level on points with the Turks but would qualify on the strength of their superior 2-0 victory in Istanbul.

In Group A, Rangers beat GC Zurich 2-1 at Ibrox — their first victory in the competition.

Newcastle United, with their strike force of Alan Shearer and Les Ferdinand absent through injuries, celebrated a defensive triumph by holding Metz 1-1 in France in the third round, first leg of the Uefa Cup. Their manager, Kevin Keegan, said: "It was forced upon us. You can't always play great football and excite the crowds. Sometimes you've got to get in the trench and dig out a result."

Newcastle's chances of reaching the last eight look quite bright and Keegan added: "One-one is a good result in Europe. It is going to be another cracker at St James' Park in a fortnight."

JOHN SPENCER'S unhappy days at Chelsea are over after he moved down a division to Queen's Park Rangers for £2.5 million, a record for the Loftus Road club. Spencer, the 26-year-old Scottish international forward, was Chelsea's top scorer last season with 13 Premiership goals, but this year manager Ruud Gullit has preferred Gianluca Vialli up front alongside Mark Hughes.

In another move, First Division strugglers Manchester City have signed 25-year-old winger Neil Heaney for £500,000 from Premiership club Southampton.

THE cricketing exodus continues from Sussex. The latest player to join is former captain Alan Wells. He has been given permission to speak to other counties. Wells, who has two years of his contract remaining, requested a move after losing the captaincy a month ago. Ed Giddins, currently suspended for failing a drug test, joined Warwickshire, while Ian Salisbury signed for Surrey and Danny Law joined Essex.

SINGSPEIL, ridden by Frankie Dettori and trained by Michael Stoute, won the £1 million Japan Cup in Tokyo on Sunday, scrambling home by a nose from the locally-trained Fabulous La Fouline, with Helissio and Strategic Choice dead-heating for third place, a length and a quarter away. It was only the second victory for England in the 16-year history of the race. "It has been one of the best days of my life," said Dettori.

GREG NORMAN won the Australian Open in Sydney on Sunday, his first tournament victory since the Doral Ryder Open in Florida eight months ago. The Australian golfer's round of 69, three under par, gave him an eight-under total of 280 and made him the only player to beat par over the Australian course. It was his fifth Australian Open title and earned him £93,000 in prize money. Wayne Grady was second and David Smail of New Zealand third.

AMERICAN Pete Sampras, No 1 tennis player in the world, beat Germany's Boris Becker 3-6, 7-6, 7-6, 6-7, 6-4 after a titanic struggling lasting four hours in the ATP finals. Both players had won this title twice since it moved from New York to Frankfurt in 1990 before switching to Hanover this year. Sampras netted $1.3 million for his troubles.

Meanwhile in New York, Steffi Graf won the Chase Championship 6-3, 4-6, 6-0, 4-6, 6-0 against Switzerland's Martina Hingis. It was the second successive year Graf has had to go the full distance.

ROY JONES captured the vacant WBO light-heavyweight title in Florida with a unanimous points decision over Mike McCallum. Jones, who is also the IBF super-midddleweight champion, floored his Jamaican opponent late in the 10th round.

ENGLAND A team notched up the fourth successive victory of their Australian tour by beating Victoria by an innings and eight runs in Melbourne. Victoria, attempting to force a draw by batting throughout the final day, frustrated England until there were just 11.4 overs left with a defiant 85-run eighth wicket partnership between Graeme Vimpani and David Saker. But Glen Chapple finally claimed the last wicket to seal England's fourth victory of the tour so far. Scores: England A 438 (Craig White 99); Victoria 211 and 219.

India v South Africa

Srinath takes six as SA fall

THE pace bowler Javagal Srinath, who impressed so much on last summer's tour of England, turned in a career-best performance to lead India to a famous 64-run victory over South Africa in the first Test in Ahmedabad last Saturday.

Srinath, who took two wickets in his first over to have South Africa reeling at nought for two, finished with career-best figures of six for 21 in 11.5 overs and deservedly picked up the accolade of Man of the Match.

The leg-spinner Anil Kumble chipped in with three for 34. The South Africa innings failed to last two full sessions as they were skittled for 105 on a wearing wicket, chasing a mere 170 to win.

South Africa had seemed safe at 48 for three but lost their last six wickets for nine in 25 balls. Six batsmen made ducks with only Hansie Cronje sticking around, unbeaten on 48.

India, who recently defeated Australia in a one-off Test, go into the second Test in Calcutta full of confidence.

India 223 (S Tendulkar 42; Donald 4-37) and 190. **South Africa** 224 (Fanie de Villiers 67no, D Cullinan 43; Joshi 4-42) and 105.
India won by 64 runs

Football Premiership: Arsenal 3 Tottenham Hotspur 1

Gunners destroy Spurs with late salvo

David Lacey

PERHAPS it needed a Frenchman to trim the feathers of the north London cockerel. Certainly Arsène Wenger's Arsenal beat Tottenham with a fine Gallic flourish at Highbury on Sunday, their first home victory over Spurs for five years and their first win against them anywhere for three, to go second in the Premiership.

Just when Gerry Francis's limited but well-organised and supremely fit Tottenham side appeared to have forced a well-merited draw, Arsenal won the match in the 88th and 89th minutes through goals from Adams and Bergkamp. Adams had not scored for 14 months, but the goal epitomised his new determination to get forward more often.

Until then it looked as if a game of imaginative movement by both sides would be let down by wayward finishing. A penalty in the first half gave Arsenal the lead, a fortunate double ricochet just before the hour brought the scores level, and there they seemed destined to remain.

The supreme difference, in the end, was Bergkamp, who played a crucial role in Adams's goal and then scored himself. On a rain-swept afternoon which made the ball as slippery as soap, the Dutchman's first touch was outstanding.

At the moment, and until Iversen arrives from Rosenborg, Tottenham have no one remotely in this class. On Sunday their best player was Campbell, superb at the back, especially in his handling of Wright, the Premiership's leading scorer.



Going for goal . . . Ian Wright scores Arsenal's first goal from the penalty spot PHOTOGRAPH: TONY HARRIS

Significantly the penalty, after 27 minutes, resulted from Wilson's failure to do likewise when Merson's pass sent Bergkamp through in the inside-right position. The Tottenham defender half-stopped his man legally and then caught Bergkamp with a flailing leg as the Dutchman tried to break clear.

Wright scored with the penalty yet might have ended the afternoon ruing at least three chances he missed in open play. Such profligacy looked like frustrating Arsenal as well as preserving Francis's record of never losing to them as a manager, first at QPR, then with Spurs. Indeed the nature of Tottenham's goal suggested the result was preordained. After 57 minutes Campbell headed on Nielsen's long throw from the right to Sinton, in space on the left. Sinton's shot cannoned off the inside of the near post, then hit Lukic on the head and rebounded into the net.

The goal followed Tottenham's one sustained spell of pressure in which Lukic thwarted Anderton and Armstrong with sharp saves, and Vieira and Armstrong shared the game's only spat. Before half-time Sheringham, inadvertently set up by Dixon's deflected clearance, had wasted Tottenham's previous best opportunity.

Spurs looked worth a point and nothing Arsenal did seemed likely to deny them the draw. Wenger's decision to replace Platt with an extra striker, Hartson, prompted Arsenal's final surge forward, but few could have anticipated the way the game would be won and lost.

In the 88th minute Merson's throw-in from the right was flicked back from the byline by Bergkamp as Adams strode towards goal. Taking the ball in his stride, the Arsenal captain produced a stunning shot which took a deflection off the crouching Carr on its way past Walker.

Highbury had scarcely recovered its wits when, in the next minute, Bergkamp gathered Wright's long centre near the left-hand byline and dummied past Carr before scoring Arsenal's third goal from the narrowest angle. It was poor reward for Tottenham's defensive efforts but Wenger's will to win had found the perfect response in his team.

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Arsenal 3, Tottenham 1. Chelsea 1, Newcastle 1; Coventry 1, Aston Villa 2; Leicester 1, Everton 2; Liverpool 1, Wimbledon 1; Middlesbrough 2, Manchester Utd 2; Southampton 0, Leeds 2; Sunderland 1, Sheffield Wednesday 1; West Ham 1, Derby County 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Newcastle (played 14, points 29); 2, Arsenal (14-28); 3, Liverpool (14-28)

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: First Division Barnsley 3, Portsmouth 2; Birmingham 1, Swindon 0; Charlton 0, Bradford 2; Crystal Palace 2, Wolves 3; Huddersfield 2, Grimsby 0; Ipswich 2, Port Vale 1; Man City 1 Tranmere 2; Oldham 2, Oxford 1; Reading 2 QPR 1; Stoke 1, Southend 2; West Brom P, Norwich P. **Leading positions:** 1, Bolton (20-40); 2, Crystal Palace (19-34); 3, Barnsley (18-33)

Second Division Blackpool 1, Notts City 0; Brentford 2, Wrexham 0, Bristol City 2, Peterboro 0; Burnley 1, Bournemouth 0; Bury 1, Plymouth 0; Gillingham 0, York 1; Luton 2, Bristol Rovers 1; Rotherham 0, Millwall 0; Shrewsbury 3, Stockport 2; Walsall 1, Crewe 0; Wycombe 0, Preston 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Millwall (20-39); 2, Brentford (20-38); 3, Bury (19-36)

Third Division Barnet 3, Doncaster 0; Brighton 1, Carlisle 3; Cambridge Utd 2, Leyton Orient 0; Cardiff 2, Hereford 0; Exeter 0, Hull 0; Lincoln 0, Mansfield 0; Northampton 2, Rochdale 2; Scarborough 0, Swansea 1, Scunthorpe 3, Darlington 2; Torquay 0, Hartlepool 1; Wigan 1, Fulham 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Fulham (20-44), 2, Cambridge Utd (20 39), Wigan (19-36)

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division Dunfermline P, Celtic P, Dundee Utd 1, Raith 2, Hibernian 0, Aberdeen 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Rangers (12-29); 2, Celtic (12-26); 3, Aberdeen (13-22)

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: First Division East Fife P, Dundee P, Falkirk 1, St Mirren 0; G Morton 3, Stirling Albion 2, Partick 0, Airdrie 0; St Johnstone 2, Clydebank 0. **Leading positions:** 1, St Johnstone (15-32), 2, Falkirk (15-26), 3, Airdrie (15-23)

Second Division Ayr 1, Queen of South 0, Clyde P, Stranraer P; Dumbarton 1, Berwick 0, Hamilton P, Brechin P, Livingston P, Stenhousemuir P. **Leading positions:** 1, Ayr (15-35); 2, Livingston (14-31), 3, Hamilton (14-22)

Third Division Alloa P, Albion P, Arbroath [illegible] Forfar 1, Montrose P, East Stirling P, [illegible] Park 2, Inverness 1, Ross County 1 Cowdenbeath 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Inverness (15-26), 2, Ross County (15-25) 3, Albion (14-24)

Scottish Coca-Cola Cup final: Rangers 4 Hearts 3

Rangers put out Hearts' fire

Patrick Glenn at Celtic Park

HEARTS, like many before them, came to the painful realisation that leaving Paul Gascoigne and Ally McCoist to their own devices is as dangerous as ignoring arsonists with a can of paraffin and a box of matches.

Two goals each from the England midfielder and the Scotland striker secured Rangers the Scottish League Cup for the 20th time. It was also the third occasion since 1993 that they have won a major trophy at Celtic Park.

Hearts' refusal to capitulate throughout an extraordinary final was emphasised by the anger of manager Jim Jefferies and captain Gary Mackay over a refereeing decision which swung the match in Rangers' favour in the second half.

Having overcome a two-goal deficit to square the match at 2-2, the Tynecastle side had the scent of a lead themselves in the 64th minute when Robertson was clearly fouled by Bjorklund close to the Hearts dug-out. The referee failed to award the free-kick and the ball was quickly played forward to Gascoigne, who put Rangers back in front. With Hearts' momentum brought to a halt, Gascoigne made it 4-2 two minutes later.

No controversy could have been forecast when McCoist scored his two in the first 26 minutes, prompting a chilling recall among the Edinburgh fans of last May's 5-1 thrashing by Rangers in the Scottish Cup final.

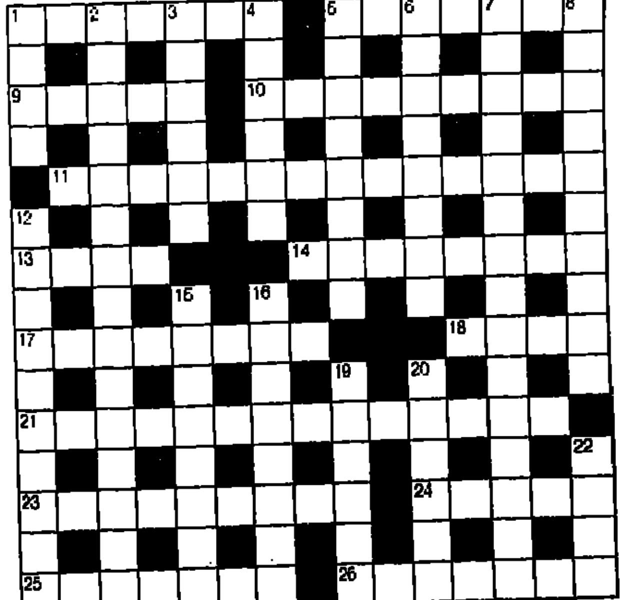
With the Hearts defenders, and Ritchie in particular, concentrating on containing Laudrup, the Danish winger suddenly shot clear of his marker and slipped the ball forward to the totally unattended McCoist. A quick turn on the edge of the box and a jab with his right foot sent the ball low to the left of Rousset.

The Hearts defenders were guilty of neglect again when a corner kick from the left was met by Petric and headed back towards Moore, who headed it on to McCoist. The striker nodded it in for his 50th goal in the League Cup, equalling the record established by Rangers' Jim Forrest 30 years ago.

Fulton, a minute from the interval, encouraged Hearts with a powerful low drive from 18 yards after McCann's corner kick had been knocked forward by Cameron.

McCann, chosen as Man of the Match, spent the second half roasting Moore down the left, and provided the ammunition for Robertson's equaliser.

Cryptic crossword by Rufus



Across

1 Bend with the king's shield (7)
5 Pinta's unsatisfactory round "The Duke" but it's good for tots (7)
9 Jack books a fortune-teller (5)
10 Prepared CD on lathe? It needs versatility (9)
11 Great set-up? A concept based on another (14)
13 Left the plant to get a blow (4)
14 Rugby player's to keep his distance (5-3)
17 The coach fails and one's missing game (8)
18 A fine rozzer catches man on the fiddle (4)
21,24 Start the business and examine the carpet fixers? (3,4,2,5,5)
23 The humiliation produced by a low story? (9)
24 see 21
25 The artiste's assistant could be Welsh (7)
26 A long journey involving a lot of lines? (7)

Down

1 A goat without hesitation is an object of ridicule (4)
2 RA's minute tactic is somehow to support with evidence (15)
3 Tailless bird seen around the foam (6)
4 The root is hard, crumbly (6)
5 Deposit the protective force here (8)
6 Seeing but not having the covering on top (8)
7 What to do if one's legs are chilly? Try harder (4,2,4,5)
8 Newcomer could have it after a long hike (10)
12 Shifty lad's back with rug. He's a rogue (10)
15 County uniform (no hat) for a civic official (8)
16 Drops duck, we hear, for an animal (8)
19 Extremely sound eggs? (3-3)
20 Henry's forty getting a bash. Bubbly? (6)
22 Catch sight of agent from the East (4)

Last week's solution